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ABSTRACT

Noting that developing a Head Start family partnership is an ongoing process that begins at enrollment and continues through transition out of the program, this guide for directors and staff looks at the process of developing such partnerships and provides the skills and information needed to form meaningful partnerships. Following an introductory section, the guide presents four training modules. Each module details expected outcomes, key concepts, background information, learning activities, and next steps. Handouts are include for each module. Module One, "Partnering with Families," guides and encourages staff in the use of professional practices to engage each family in a family partnership agreement process. Module Two, "Exploring Family Growth," takes an in-depth look at the family's growth and development and provides information for assessing the impact of significant life events. Module Three, "Making Family Goals a Reality," provides staff training on helping families identify and achieve their goals utilizing a six-step approach. Module Four, "Practicing Professionalism," examines strategies surrounding the professional issues of confidentiality, roles and boundaries, mandated reporting and record-keeping. The final section of the guide contains continuing professional development and sources for supplemental information that can assist participants in extending the learning opportunities begun in this guide. (SD)

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HEAD START

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

Family Partnerships: A Continuous Process

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth, and Families
Head Start Bureau

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• Photo courtesy of Rosemount Head Start, Washington, DC •

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Often when we hear the word "hand," we think of a part of the human body attached to the end of the forearm, including the wrist, palm, fingers, and thumb. Rarely do we think of the symbolic meaning of a hand given in partnership. Listen as parents describe their Head Start partnership experiences:

HELPING — *I owe a lot to Head Start. Head Start saw the potential in me and helped me develop it.*
—Parent, Alabama

ACCEPTING — *It does not matter where you came from or where you are. Head Start is only concerned with where you want to go.*
—Parent, Washington

NURTURING — *I was inspired to excellence by this wonderful program.*
—Parent, Ohio

DYNAMIC — *Because of Head Start, I now have dreams for the future.*
—Parent, Indiana

SUPPORTIVE — *The Head Start program was the support system for (members of) my family to see more clearly where we've been, where we are, and what goals for our future we want to achieve.*
—Parent, Virginia

Partnerships are the hallmark of Head Start's success; they represent strong and caring relationships between Head Start staff and families. The family partnership agreement is an individualized, strengths-based, family-driven **process**—one in which staff provide support to families in response to their interests, goals, strengths, and needs. This technical guide, *Family Partnerships: A Continuous Process*, takes an in-depth look at this process.

Overview

Purpose

Head Start staff play critical roles in promoting and sustaining supportive family partnerships. These partnerships, which are the foundation for Head Start's success, are characterized by mutual respect and trust, acceptance, objectivity, flexibility, personalized attention, and cultural awareness.

Developing a family partnership is an ongoing process which begins at enrollment and continues until the family has made a successful transition from the Head Start program. *Family Partnerships: A Continuous Process*, takes an in-depth look at this process and provides Head Start staff with the skills and information needed to implement this partnership.

Audience

Target audiences for this guide's training program are:

- **Directors,** who are making the development of family partnership agreements an integral part of their Head Start program's mission, goals, and services.
- **Program managers,** who are responsible for staff-development activities.
- **Head Start staff,** who interact regularly with families and want to enhance their family-partnership skills.

Performance Standards

A major goal of Head Start is to support families through staff-family partnerships. To help accomplish that goal, this guide offers training that can help programs meet Head Start Program Performance Standards requiring them to:

- **Work** with families and **support** the development of individualized family partnership agreements;
- **Work** with families to identify their goals, strengths, and supports;
- **Follow up** with each family to determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of the services received met the family's expectations and circumstances;
- **Abide** by the program's standards of conduct; and
- **Establish** and **maintain** necessary and required records.

Organization

Family Partnerships: A Continuous Process is one in a series of training guides designed to increase the capacity of Head Start staff working directly with families. As a technical guide, the skills and information presented prepare staff to partner with families. It builds on the skills developed in the

guide *A Design for Family Support*. By completing the activities in this guide, participants will achieve the following **guide outcomes:**

- **Partner** with individual families and **offer** them support based on their strengths, interests, and needs;
- **Work** with families to develop and implement family partnership agreements;
- **Understand** and **assess** the impact of significant life events on families;
- **Encourage** family growth and development by helping families articulate, define, and achieve realistic, specific, time-limited, and results-oriented goals;
- **Record** the family's progress and **follow up** with the family on services received; and
- **Acknowledge** and **uphold** professional responsibilities.

The guide is divided into four modules, each with specific outcomes for participants to achieve. The **module outcomes** evolve from the guide outcomes. The guide includes the following modules:

- **Module 1:** ***Partnering with Families***

  A family partnership is an ongoing, collaborative process where information is shared between staff-family partners and integrated continuously into all activities. This module encourages staff's use of professional practices to engage each family in a family partnership agreement process.

- **Module 2:** ***Exploring Family Growth***

  This module takes an in-depth look at the family's growth and development. Staff learn to chart the family life cycle, identify strengths, assess the impact of significant life events, and recognize supports. Information gathered during the exploration of family growth lays the foundation for supporting families by focusing on their interests, strengths, goals, and needs—the basis of the family partnership agreement.

- **Module 3:** ***Making Family Goals a Reality***

  Each family determines the direction of the family partnership agreement. Goal setting is one type of interaction that can occur during this process. Module 3 provides staff training on helping families identify and achieve their goals. This module focuses on the strategies of "visioning," "creating

the family picture," and a "six-step approach" as methods for making family goals a reality.

- **Module 4:** ***Practicing Professionalism***

  In this module, staff examine and practice strategies surrounding the professional issues of confidentiality, roles and boundaries, mandated reporting, and record-keeping.

Each module also includes **key concepts** summarizing the activities' main ideas. The module's **background information** provides a context for trainers on the core concepts covered in the module. Follow-up activities entitled **Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice** are located at the end of each module. These activities help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress.

Two training options are provided in this guide so that management teams can respond to the different learning styles of staff. Some local Head Start programs may want to provide the guide's activities in the workshop format; others may want to use the coaching format; and still others may want to use a combination of both. These two training strategies are described in the guide's **Definition of Icons** section.

The **Continuing Professional Development** section lists activities that Head Start programs may find useful for reinforcing and expanding staff skills in partnering with families.

A **Resources** section, located at the end of the guide, describes books, journals, newsletters, and organizations that offer in-depth information on the topics covered in this guide.

Trainer or Coach Selection

Management staff should carefully select the person or persons who will provide the training and/or coaching activities.

- Trainers and coaches need to be experienced in providing services to families and delivering training sessions. Candidates should be trained in family-centered work and should promote a family-strengths model.

- Candidates may be found in colleges and universities that offer programs in social work, family support, family preservation, and family counseling. Or, they may be located in community agencies such as other Head Start programs, family-resource centers, family-support programs, and parent-education programs.

Introduction

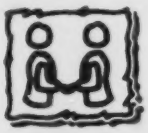
Instructions

Before conducting the activities in this guide, prepare for the training event by completing the following:

- **Note** that this guide, *Family Partnerships: A Continuous Process*, builds on the guide *A Design for Family Support*.
- **Understand** that the family partnership agreement process outlined in the guide can be used to support other activities, such as successful transitions, promoting self-sufficiency, preventing family crisis, etc. Look in the series *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community* for more information on these topics.
- **Plan** on completing all the module activities, in either the coaching or workshop format, to achieve the module's outcomes. While each activity is written to stand alone, most activities are sequential and build on previous material.
- **Evaluate** the activities and handouts to determine their appropriateness for training participants. Activities are written for staff who regularly interact with families. However, some activities may not suit the individual training needs of all staff members.
- **Use** the time frames identified for each activity in the **At A Glance** only as a guide. Time will vary depending on the group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's skill, and the flow of the discussion.
- **Review** with participants the program's policy for maintaining group and family confidentiality prior to delivering all training sessions.

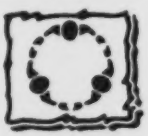
Definition of Icons

Coaching



A training strategy that fosters the development of skills through tailored instruction, demonstrations, practice, and feedback. The activities are written for a coach to work closely with one to three participants.

Workshop



A facilitated group training strategy that fosters the development of skills through group interaction. These activities are written for up to 25 participants working in small or large groups with one or two trainers.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Activities assigned by the trainer or coach immediately following the completion of the module to help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress toward achieving the expected outcomes of the module.

Continuing Professional Development

Follow-up activities supporting continued staff development in the skills addressed in this training guide, including:

(1) Opportunities tailored to the participant to enhance the skills developed in the training; and

(2) Strategies to help the participant identify new skills, along with knowledge needed to expand and/or complement these skills, through opportunities in such areas as higher education, credentialing, or community educational programs.

Introduction

At A Glance

Modules	*Activity*	*Time**	*Materials*
Module 1: Partnering with Families	Activity 1-1: Family Partnership Agreements (W)	120 minutes	Handouts 1 and 2, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 1-2: Revisit! Review! Revise! (W)	60 minutes	Handout 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 1-3: Strategies for Working as Family Partners (W)	45 minutes	Handout 4, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 1-4: Working as Family Partners (C)	60 minutes *(Two 30-minute sessions)*	Handouts 2 and 5, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
Module 2: Exploring Family Growth	Activity 2-1: Family Growth (W)	90 minutes	Handouts 1, 2, and 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 2-2: Family Responsibilities (W)	90 minutes	Handouts 4, 5, and 6, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 2-3: Examining Family Growth (C)	120 minutes *(Two 60-minute sessions)*	Handouts 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
Module 3: Making Family Goals a Reality	Activity 3-1: Identifying Family Goals (W)	120 minutes	Handout 1, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 3-2: Achieving the Family's Goals (W)	120 minutes	Handouts 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, Name Tags, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 3-3: Creating the Future (C)	90 minutes *(Two 45- minute sessions)*	Handout 1, 3, and 5, Newsprint, Markers, Tape

(W) = *Workshop Activity*
(C) = *Coaching Activity*

*Time may vary depending upon the group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's skill, and the flow of discussion.

Modules	*Activity*	*Time**	*Materials*
Module 4: Practicing Professionalism	Activity 4-1: Developing Professionalism (W)	90 minutes	Handouts 1 and 2, Program Policy and Procedures *(Confidentiality, Child Abuse and Neglect, Record-Keeping,* and *Standards of Conduct)*, 9 Sheets of Labeled Newsprint, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 4-2: Record-Keeping (W)	90 minutes	Handouts 3, 4, 5, and 6, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 4-3: Professionalism (C)	60 minutes	Handouts 1 and 7, Program Policy and Procedures *(Confidentiality, Child Abuse and Neglect, Record-Keeping,* and *Standards of Conduct)*, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 4-4: The Family Storybook (C)	45 minutes	Handout 8, Newsprint, Markers, Tape

(W) = *Workshop Activity*
(C) = *Coaching Activity*

*Time may vary depending upon the group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's skill, and the flow of discussion.

Partnering with Families

The network of caring relationships provides an ever expanding circle of support for both child and family.
—Head Start Advisory Committee on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will be able to:

- **Explain** how working with families is a collaborative process;
- **Recognize** how a family's readiness, interests, strengths, and needs individualize the family partnership agreement process;
- **Identify** and **use** strategies for engaging families throughout the family partnership agreement process; and
- **Demonstrate** professional practices in their work with families.

Key Concepts

Key concepts of Module 1 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed to work collaboratively with families include:

- **Family Partnerships.** Family partnerships are ongoing, collaborative relationships between staff and families in the Head Start community.
- **Family Partnership Agreements.** As part of the ongoing family partnership, staff must offer parents opportunities to develop and implement family partnership agreements. The family partnership agreement is an individualized, strengths-based, family-driven **process**—one in which staff provide support to families in response to their interests, goals, strengths, and needs.
- **Revisit! Review! Revise!** The family partnership agreement process cannot be a one-time event. Instead, it must evolve and adapt to the changing desires and needs of the family.
- **Approaches for Working as Family Partners.** Staff can use both formal and informal approaches to partner with families, including conferences, team meetings, phone conversations, chance meetings, progress letters, and home visits.

Background Information

The term **family partnership** characterizes the ongoing, evolving, and integrated relationship between staff and family in the Head Start community. Building a family partnership is an interactive process that starts when a parent says, "I want to enroll my child," and continues until the family has made a successful transition from the Head Start program.

Family Partnerships

Partnering with families is not a new philosophy. In 1965, Head Start was designed to encourage and support family involvement at all program levels. This commitment to involving families has been consistent throughout Head Start's history.

Family partnerships are trusting, respectful, and supportive relationships. Staff foster these unique relationships by reaching out to families and showing them that they are valued and important. It takes time to build a trusting relationship in which the family feels comfortable confiding in staff and sharing its hopes for the future, as well as its worries. As trust is established, the family begins to accept the staff person as a resource, advocate, and source of support.

The Family Partnership Agreement Process

As part of the ongoing family partnership, staff must offer parents opportunities to develop and implement family partnership agreements. The family partnership agreement is an individualized, strengths-based, family-driven **process**—one in which staff provide support to families in response to their interests, goals, strengths, and needs.

The family partnership agreement process recognizes that there is no "cookie cutter approach" to working with families. Instead, staff initiate the process and provide partnership opportunities for families by asking, in effect, "How can Head Start support you?" These agreements are not necessarily formal documents, step-by-step activities, or interactions that must occur with all Head Start families.

While each family determines the direction of the family partnership agreement, the process can include the following types of interactions:

- **Identify** and **reinforce** family strengths and supports.
- **Explore** and **support** a family's growth and development.
- **Complement** pre-existing family plans, including transition plans, health and nutrition plans, Individualized Family Service Plans, Individualized Education Plans, and plans developed by other community agencies.
- **Support** families as they identify and work to achieve their goals.
- **Provide** needed emergency and/or crisis assistance.
- **Offer** opportunities for families to enhance their parenting, literacy, education, and job skills.
- **Facilitate** family access to services and resources in the community.

- **Assist** parents in advocating for their children in schools and the community service system; or
- **Revisit, review,** and **revise** family partnership agreements.

Head Start families vary with regard to their interests or readiness for staff involvement in family partnership agreements. Some families are already clear about their goals and are not likely to need or see a reason for the involvement of Head Start staff in their plans. Other families, for a variety of reasons, may not yet be ready to develop agreements with Head Start staff. In these situations, staff should extend invitations to the family to join them in partnership, but be prepared to wait patiently for the family to accept. For families who have plans already developed with other professionals, staff should work to support the implementation of these plans. Finally, there are Head Start families who are ready to pursue family partnership agreements with the support of staff. No matter where families fall in their readiness, it is important for staff never to lose sight of the right of families to decide when and how they want Head Start involved in their lives.

Revisit! Review! Revise!

Just as families grow and develop over time, so must the partnership; it is not a one-time event. Instead, the partnership changes, requiring more or less contact, depending on the desires and needs of the family. Staff should Revisit! Review! Revise! to:

- **Reassess** the family's strengths, interests, needs, challenges, and supports;
- **Re-evaluate** and **modify** plans with the family;
- **Renew** the family partnership;
- **Follow up** with the family to determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of services received met its expectations, needs, and circumstances;
- **Review** the family's progress;
- **Provide** support to help the family overcome challenges and setbacks;
- **Identify** and **reinforce** family achievements; and
- **Celebrate** success.

Working as Family Partners

The family partnership agreement process is flexible. Whatever the family partnership agreement might be, it can be achieved by establishing strategies, responsibilities, and timetables. In addition, programs and staff must practice professionalism throughout the process by maintaining family confidentiality, defining roles, establishing and maintaining boundaries with families, following mandatory reporting policies, and keeping appropriate documentation of interactions.

Contact between staff and family may be both formal and informal and can include regularly scheduled visits or brief conversations as the parents are involved in program activities. This is different from "traditional" family interviews because the family is always the senior partner. Family members are regarded as experts about their family, while staff and other participants serve as resources for supporting the family. Approaches for working collaboratively with families include:

- **Formal Approaches.** Formal contact often occurs in accordance with written policies or procedures, and is used when there is a definite purpose for Head Start staff's, family members', or invited community service providers' involvement. Formal strategies include team meetings, written plans, letters, and/or home visits. Visits can take place at the Head Start site, the family's home, or such community settings as a church, park, or recreation center.

- **Informal Approaches.** Informal contact continues through a more casual, easy, or relaxed manner. This can include "checking in" with parents by phone, talking with parents when meeting them unexpectedly, sending notes home with the child, reaching out to parents when they come to the Head Start center, and encouraging families to apply their skills and talents to Head Start activities.

Staff use many different approaches to work with families; the decision to use one over another is based on the interests, challenges, or wishes of the family. Because one approach may not always work, even with the same family, it is important to know, and be able to skillfully use, a variety of approaches. Often staff rely on the formal approaches when working with families. However, informal approaches are equally valuable.

Preparation Note: More information on essential partnership-building skills, such as: exploring family strengths, building rapport, reframing, partnership talk, and joining with a family, can be found in the guide *A Design for Family Support*.

Activity 1-1: Family Partnership Agreements

Purpose: To examine the process of working in partnership with families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Program Scenarios: Family Partnerships*
- Handout 2: *Family Partnership Agreements*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain that in this activity participants will examine the family partnership agreement process. Emphasize that programs and staff have joint responsibility for fostering effective working relationships with families.

2. *Review the concept of family partnerships.* Using the module's background information as a guide, discuss the purpose and characteristics of a family partnership. Ask the following questions to initiate the discussion:

   - Why are family partnerships important in your work with children and families?
   - What opportunities do you have to partner with families?
   - What makes an effective family partnership?

3. (a) *Initiate a "round robin" discussion.* Divide participants into four small groups. Distribute handout 1. Instruct everyone to read the first program scenario. Listing responses on newsprint, ask small group 1 to respond to the following questions:

   - Did staff initiate a staff-family partnership?
   - What activities did the family partnership focus on?
   - How did the family partnership assist or benefit the family? Staff? The program?
   - What would you have done differently to strengthen the family partnership?
   - What impact did the program's policies or procedures have on the staff's ability to form a family partnership?
   - What program policies or procedures would you change? Keep the same?

(b) Ask the three remaining groups to take turns adding their thoughts or concerns to the first group's responses.

(c) Repeat the process with the remaining scenarios, starting each time with a different small group.

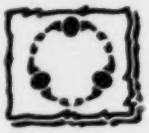
4. (a) *Discuss family partnership agreements.* Using the background information as a guide, discuss the family partnership agreement process. Next, distribute handout 2. Reinforce that this is an ongoing process. Explain that families, not staff, determine the direction of the family partnership agreement.

   (b) Engage participants in comparing the activities in handout 2 to the activities they pursue with families.

5. *Closing.* When closing the activity, make the following points:

   - The family partnership agreement is an individualized, strengths-based, family-driven **process**—one in which staff provide support to families in response to their interests, goals, strengths, and needs;
   - Family partnership agreements are ongoing;
   - The family is always the senior partner;
   - Each family partnership agreement is unique;
   - The family partnership agreement process requires program policies and procedures to guide and support professional staff practices; and
   - Whatever direction the family partnership agreement takes, it can be achieved by establishing strategies, responsibilities, and timetables.

Activity 1-2: Revisit! Review! Revise!



Purpose: To understand how the family partnership agreement process changes, grows, and develops over time.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *Revisit! Review! Revise!*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain the importance of revisiting, reviewing, and revising. Make the following points:

   - Revisit! Review! and Revise! can involve:

     — Reassessing the family's strengths, needs, challenges, and supports;
     — Re-evaluating and modifying plans with the family;
     — Renewing the family partnership;
     — Following up with the family to determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of services received met its expectations, needs, and circumstances;
     — Reviewing the family's progress;
     — Providing support to help the family overcome challenges and setbacks;
     — Identifying and reinforcing family achievements; and
     — Celebrating success.

   - As the family grows and develops, the partnership evolves into one that requires more or less contact depending on the changing desires and needs of the family.

   - Family members are regarded as experts about their family, while staff serve as resources for supporting the family.

2. *Conduct a small group exercise.* Distribute handout 3. Have participants form three small groups and assign each group one of the topics listed on the handout. Tell the groups that they have 20 minutes to work on the task. Make sure each group appoints a recorder (to record the group's results on newsprint) and a reporter (to share the results with the large group).

3. *Debrief the exercise.* Reconvene the large group after 20 minutes. Have the reporters read their assignment, then share their groups' ideas and strategies. After each group has reported, encourage members of the large group to add their own ideas/strategies.

4. *Close the activity.* Reinforce that revisiting, reviewing, and revising are essential to supporting the ongoing family partnership agreement process.

Activity 1-3: Strategies for Working as Family Partners

Purpose: To learn approaches for working in partnership with families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 4: *Family Scenario: Strategies for Partnering with Families*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Emphasize that there are many different approaches for working with families; the decision to use one over another is based on the interests, challenges, or wishes of the family.

2. (a) *Review formal and informal approaches.* Explain that contact between staff and family may be both formal and informal. Make the following points:

   - **Formal Approaches.** Formal contact often occurs in accordance with written policies or procedures, and is used when there is a definite purpose for Head Start staff's, family members', or invited community service providers' involvement. Formal strategies include team meetings, written plans, letters, and/or home visits. Visits can take place at the Head Start site, the family's home, or such community settings as a church, park, or recreation center.

   - **Informal Approaches.** Informal contact continues through a more casual, easy, or relaxed manner. This can include "checking in" with parents by phone, talking with parents when meeting them unexpectedly, sending notes home with the child, reaching out to parents when they come to the Head Start center, and encouraging families to apply their skills and talents to Head Start activities.

   (b) Reinforce that these approaches are different from "traditional" family interviews because the family is the senior partner; family members are regarded as experts about their family, while staff and others serve as resources for supporting the family.

3. *Begin a small group exercise.* Distribute handout 4. Divide the group into two teams. Assign each team one approach (formal or informal) for continuing the partnership. Ask each group to read the family scenario and answer the following questions:

   - Which of the Nukamtu's concerns or issues could this approach best address?

   - What specific strategy or strategies would you use to carry out this approach?

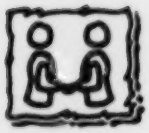
- How do you think the Nukamtu family would react to this approach?

Ask each team to appoint a reporter to summarize discussion for the larger group.

4. *Debrief the exercise.* After 20 minutes, reconvene the large group. Ask each team to recap its discussion for the large group. Invite other teams to share their reactions, thoughts, and feelings.

5. *Closing.* Explain to participants that there are many ways to work with families and that one approach may not work all the time, even with the same family. Encourage participants to practice using a variety of approaches to work with families. Reinforce that while formal approaches such as team meetings, home visits, and support groups can address a family's concerns, informal approaches such as notes home, phone calls, peer support, informal chats as parents drop off or pick up their children, and opportunities for families to contribute their skills and talents to Head Start activities are equally valuable.

Activity 1-4: Working as Family Partners



Purpose: To examine the ongoing family partnership agreement process and learn approaches for facilitating the process.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *Family Partnership Agreements*
- Handout 5: *Self-Assessment: Partnering with Families*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

> **Coach Preparation Note:** This coaching activity involves two sessions and two homework assignments.
>
> - In Session 1, you will work with participants to study the family partnership agreement process, including the methods and activities involved in continuing a family partnership. You will ask participants to interview other staff at various program levels.
> - Session 2 involves a discussion of the approaches for working as partners with families. You will ask participants to complete a self-assessment.

Session 1

1. *Provide an overview of the activity.* Explain that this coaching activity involves two sessions.

2. *Review the concept of family partnerships.* Using the module's background information, discuss the purpose and characteristics of a family partnership. Ask the following questions to initiate the conversation:

   - What activities does a family partnership focus on?
   - How does a family partnership assist or benefit the family? Staff? The program?
   - What impact do program policies or procedures have on staff's ability to form a family partnership?
   - What current program policies or procedures would you change? Keep the same?

3. (a) *Discuss family partnership agreements.* Using the background information as a guide, discuss the family partnership agreement process. Make the following points:

   - The family partnership agreement is an individualized, strengths-based, family-driven **process**—one in which staff provide support to families in response to their interests and needs.
   - Family partnership agreements are ongoing;
   - The family is always the senior partner;
   - Each family partnership agreement is unique;
   - The family partnership agreement process requires program policies and procedures to guide and support professional staff practices; and
   - Whatever direction the family partnership agreement takes, it can be achieved by establishing strategies, responsibilities, and timetables.

   (b) Distribute handout 2 and discuss the process of working in a family partnership.

4. *Assign homework.* Tell participants to interview at least three staff members about their family partnership experiences and the activities associated with these experiences; encourage participants to include one Head Start manager or coordinator. With staff, develop an interview guide that asks about practices that inhibit or promote family partnerships (see step 1, Session 2 for examples). Set a date and time for Session 2.

1. *Debrief the homework assignment.* Encourage participants to discuss their interview with staff members. Ask:

- What makes an effective family partnership?
- What kinds of staff activities promote family partnerships?
- What impacts do the Head Start program's policies and procedures have on staff ability to form and sustain family partnerships?

2. (a) *Discuss different approaches for partnering with families.* Emphasize that there are many different approaches for working with families; the decision to use one over the other is based on the interests, challenges, or wishes of the family. Explain that contact between staff and family may be both formal and informal. Make the following points:

   - **Formal Approaches.** Formal contact often occurs in accordance with written policies or procedures, and is used when there is a definite purpose for Head Start staff's, family members', or invited community service providers' involvement. Formal strategies include team meetings, written plans, letters, and/or home visits. Visits can take place at the Head Start site, the family's home, or such community settings as a church, park, or recreation center.

   - **Informal Approaches.** Informal contact continues through a more casual, easy, or relaxed manner. This can include "checking in" with parents by phone, talking with parents when meeting them unexpectedly, sending notes home with the child, reaching out to parents when they come to the Head Start center, and encouraging families to apply their skills and talents to Head Start activities.

   (b) Reinforce that working as partners is different from "traditional" family interviews because the family is the senior partner; family members are regarded as experts about their family, while staff and other participants serve as resources for supporting the family.

3. *Assign homework.* Distribute handout 5. As homework, ask participants to complete the self-assessment of their family-partnering skills.

4. *Debrief the homework.* Ask participants to share their reactions, thoughts, and feelings about their self-assessment findings. With staff, identify some steps for professional development and add them to handout 5.

5. *Closing.* Explain to participants that there are many ways to work with families and that one approach may not work all the time, even with the same family. Encourage participants to practice using a variety of approaches to work with families. Reinforce that while formal approaches such as multi-disciplinary teams, home visits, referrals, and support groups can address a family's concerns, informal approaches such as notes home, phone calls, peer support, informal chats as parents drop off or pick up their children, and opportunities for families to contribute their skills and talents to Head Start activities are equally valuable.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 1 are presented below. After completing Module 1, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one "Next Step" activity to work on individually or as part of a team.

- **Enhancing Family Partnership Skills**

  Encourage staff to critique their own strengths in working collaboratively with families. Using handout 5, have staff assess their strengths. Then, ask staff to design a plan for skill improvement. With staff, revisit and revise the plan at three-month intervals. Make sure to reinforce their efforts. Suggest resources for staff to read or contact from the **Resources** section of this guide. Support staff as they continually reassess and refine their skills.

- **Looking at Program Policies and Procedures**

  Have staff identify program policies and procedures that hinder the development of effective family partnerships. Encourage staff to suggest program changes to facilitate family partnerships. Ensure that suggested policies are responsive to family diversity and the principles of family support by instructing staff to have the Head Start community review the proposed changes. Have staff share their findings and suggestions with the Head Start Program's Policy Council and all Head Start staff.

- **Applying Informal Strategies to Encourage Family Partnerships**

  Have staff monitor their efforts to reach out to families and provide opportunities for families to partner with them. Ask staff to keep a daily log of their "casual" interactions with families, documenting what they say or do each day to show support and build rapport. Review the log with staff every two weeks and discuss the outcomes of their interactions with families. With staff, identify what they might do next to encourage partnerships with the families.

Handout 1: Program Scenarios: Family Partnerships

Instructions

Read and discuss each of the following program scenarios. Focus your discussion on these questions: Did staff initiate a staff-family partnership? What activities did the family partnership focus on? How did the family partnership assist or benefit the family? Staff? Program? What would you have done differently to strengthen the family partnership? What impact did the program's policies or procedures have on the staff's ability to form a family partnership? What program policies or procedures would you change? Keep the same?

Program Scenarios

- **Deer Park Head Start**

  To speed up the enrollment process, the Head Start program has preassembled packets available for parents who come to inquire about enrolling their children. These packets contain an application, health forms, income guidelines, a Head Start brochure, and a community resource guide. Parents are given a date and time to come back and meet with a family service worker. The parents are asked to have all forms in the packet completed when they return.

  At the follow-up meeting, with papers and forms completed, parents are told whether their children are eligible for enrollment. Eligible families are given a starting date for their children and are taken on a tour of the facility. Children usually remain in the classroom with teaching staff while parents are given an orientation with other parents. During the orientation, the philosophy of Head Start is explained and the parents are given the opportunity to introduce themselves.

- **Little Tikes Head Start**

  Last Saturday, Jamie Schultz and her son, Paul, attended a "welcome back" event at the Head Start center. The event was designed to reacquaint the children and families with the program prior to its opening. Jamie and Paul were able to meet all the staff and other families, and attend a barbecue. Paul also was invited to participate in a talent show, in "Children's Olympics," and in arts and crafts.

  While the children were working on a family tree, the parents were encouraged to record their family's story. The staff provided examples of how families grow and change over time. The Head Start director handed each family a handmade, blank storybook. The director encouraged the parents to place their family tree and highlights of their family's development in the storybook.

  Today, Jack Quinn, a family service worker, is coming to the Schultz's home. Jamie is very excited to tell Jack what the family has been doing over the summer. As Jack and Jamie catch up, they begin to discuss Jamie's hopes and goals for the family. Jack listens to the challenges that Jamie has overcome, affirms the family's strengths and supports, and applauds her success. By the end of the visit, Jamie has begun writing three goals and plans for achieving them in her family storybook.

Handout 1: Program Scenario: Family Partnerships (continued)

- **Poplar Heights Head Start**

  Poplar Heights' family service staff are required to conduct two home visits each year. However, because most of the neighborhoods are deemed unsafe by the police department, each family is asked to meet the family service worker (FSW) at the Head Start center. While these meetings are warm and friendly, there are usually many interruptions.

  During these visits, the FSW and the family touch on numerous family topics, the weather, the community, and upcoming program events. The FSW reinforces her role as a support to the family and explains that Head Start can help with the family's concerns or goals. During the discussion, the FSW discusses the opportunities for parent involvement and lets the family know when the next parent meeting will be. At the close of the meeting, the FSW encourages the family to call her if anyone needs anything. After each meeting, the FSW carefully documents the visit.

  A few months before the end of the year, the FSW begins to develop a transition plan for each family. The FSW provides the family a list of community supports and explains that the list contains resources the family may need once its time at Head Start ends. The FSW asks the family to sign information release forms, in case they are needed at a later time.

- **Youth Action Head Start**

  When Maria, a parent volunteer, enters the Youth Action Head Start center, she is greeted by an abundance of beautiful art work. Maria quickly looks for her child's drawing and readily notices the progress of her daughter, Joy. She is greeted by a friendly face and asked if she needs any help. Maria explains that she has an appointment with Dollie, her family service worker.

  Quickly, Dollie enters, greets Maria with a hug, and asks, "What can I do for you?" At Maria's suggestion, the two move to the outdoor picnic area. Maria happily explains that her new apartment complex is wonderful; it has a play group for Joy, laundry facilities, a bus stop, and a fitness center! Dollie congratulates Maria on attaining her goal and working through all the hard times to achieve it. Dollie encourages Maria to discuss how she feels about accomplishing her goal.

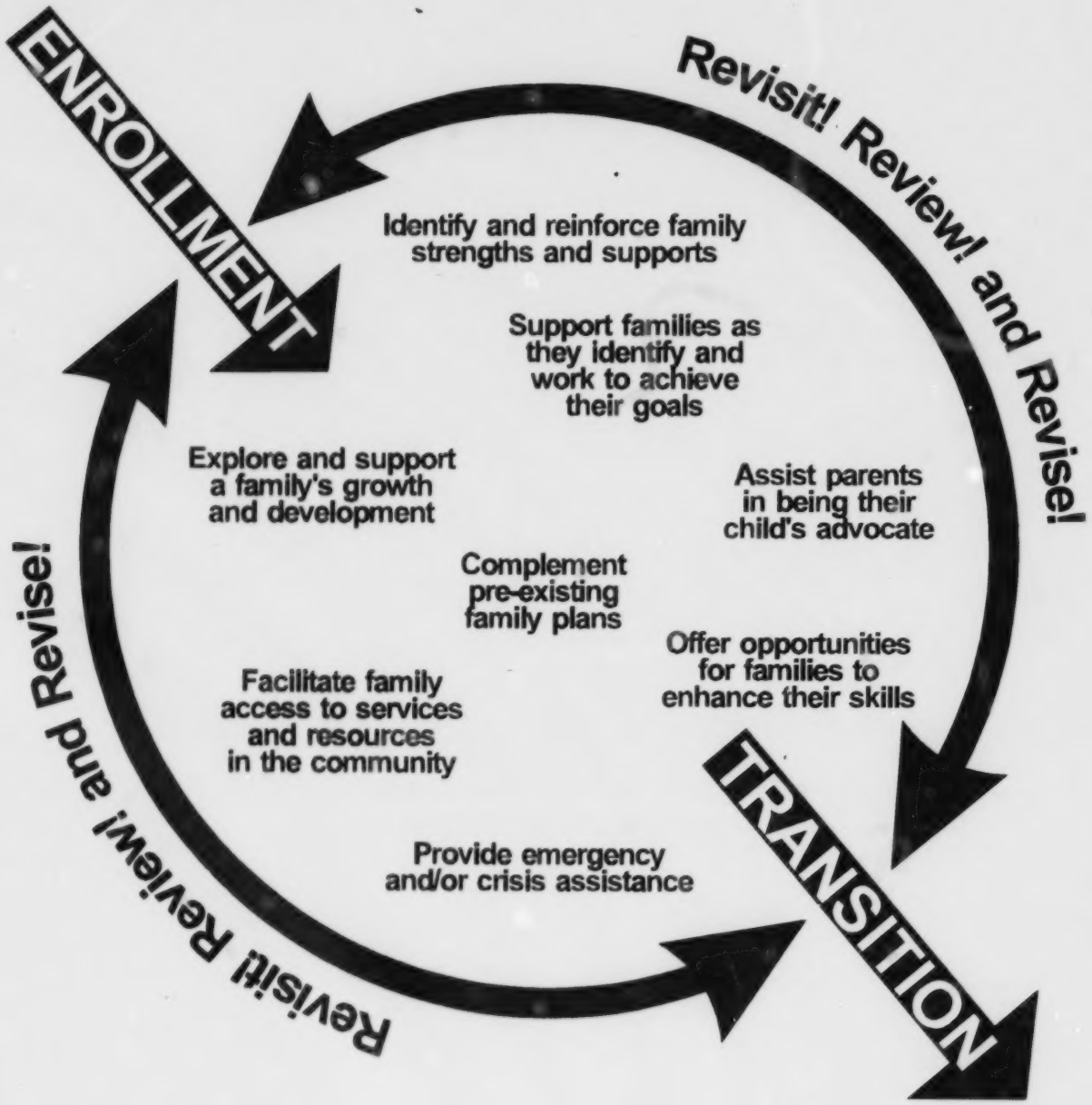
  As the meeting comes to a close, Dollie asks Maria, "What's next for your family? Where do you want to go from here?" Maria explains that one of the parents at Joy's play group is encouraging her to take a computer training course. Maria explains, however, that she doesn't have enough money saved to cover the application fee.

  Two days later, Maria receives a plant from the Head Start program as a housewarming gift. The card reads, "Congratulations on your new home and all your hard work!!"

Handout 2: Family Partnership Agreements

Overview

Family partnerships are ongoing, collaborative relationships between staff and family in the Head Start community. The family partnership agreement is an individualized, strengths-based, family-driven, and staff-supported ***process****. Each family determines the direction of the family partnership agreement, which can be achieved by establishing strategies, responsibilities, and timetables. The process often includes the following types of interactions:*


ENROLLMENT
Revisit! Review! and Revise!
Identify and reinforce family strengths and supports
Support families as they identify and work to achieve their goals
Assist parents in being their child's advocate
Offer opportunities for families to enhance their skills
TRANSITION
Provide emergency and/or crisis assistance
Facilitate family access to services and resources in the community
Complement pre-existing family plans
Explore and support a family's growth and development
Revisit! Review! and Revise!

Handout 3: Revisit! Review! Revise!

Instructions

In your small group, review your topic assignment, as presented. Make sure the results of your discussion are recorded on newsprint.

- **Topic 1: Revisit! Review! Revise!**

  Discuss strategies for revisiting, reviewing, and revising family partnership agreements. Identify strategies you use now, as well as those you would like to try with families.

- **Topic 2: Overcoming Challenges and Setbacks**

  Discuss times when you have worked with families to overcome challenges and setbacks. Discuss strategies you used to help families during those times. Brainstorm some new strategies.

- **Topic 3: Acknowledging and Celebrating Success**

  Discuss ways to celebrate the mini-successes and major achievements of families. Identify specific strategies or activities to recognize and reinforce family progress, as well as the contributions of staff and community partners.

Handout 4: Family Scenario: Strategies for Partnering with Families

Instructions

As a team, read the family scenario. Then, using the assigned approach (formal or informal), discuss the following questions: Which of the Nukamtu's concerns or issues could the approach best address? What specific strategy or strategies would you use to carry out this approach? How do you think the Nukamtu family would react to this approach?

The Nukamtu Family

Lee Nukamtu:	Father of four, computer-factory assembler
Cho Nukamtu:	Mother of four, homemaker with a degree in biology
Rae Nukamtu:	Age 6
Ann Nukamtu:	Age 5
Joe Nukamtu:	Age 3
Ben Nukamtu:	Age 2

Lee and Cho Nukamtu have been married for seven years and have four young children. Lee Nukamtu recently enrolled two of the children in the Big Valley Head Start program. He was very pleased to learn that Head Start accepted both Ann and Joe this year, because the family has been on the waiting list for the last ten months.

Lee works as a screen assembler at the computer factory. The job, according to Lee, is a blessing because he is home from work each day at four o'clock, giving him time to spend with his family. Cho has a degree in biology from a university in her native country. She speaks no English and has enrolled in an ESL class. However, she is deeply frustrated because the classes do not provide her with the technical literacy skills she needs to get a good job.

The oldest child, Rae, is in first grade and attends the local elementary school. He is a rambunctious child with an insatiable curiosity about everything. Ann is adjusting to Head Start with no problems. She has made friends quickly and seems to really enjoy the experience. Joe, on the other hand, cries when he is brought into his classroom. On some days, Cho and Ben have had to remain with him, because the minute Cho disappears, Joe begins to scream. One day, Joe screamed for three hours before falling asleep on the floor. Lee recently asked if Ann and Joe could be put in the same classroom to ease Joe's discomfort.

Currently, Cho stays at home with Ben, the family's youngest. However, Cho wants to work full time on her English skills and find a job. Cho's neighbor, who has a child the same age as Ben, told her about a community child-care program. Lee called the program to find out more information and to enroll Ben, but there are no openings at this time.

Handout 5: Self-Assessment: Partnering with Families

Instructions

This checklist will help you identify your strengths for working in partnership with families, as well as ways you might grow and change. Place check marks (✔) in the boxes next to the questions you rate as strengths. Then, think about what you currently do and what you would like to improve on.

Family Partnership Agreement Process. As part of the ongoing family partnership, staff must offer parents opportunities to develop and implement individualized family partnership agreements. Do you

- ❑ Routinely work with families to identify their strengths and supports?
- ❑ Support a family's ongoing growth and development?
- ❑ Consider the culture and the unique characteristics, situations, desires, and needs of each family when providing support?
- ❑ Allow families to choose when, where, and how to be involved with Head Start?
- ❑ Complement and support pre-existing family plans?

Suggestions for Growth or Change:

1)

2)

3)

Handout 5: Self-Assessment: Partnering with Families (continued)

Revisit! Review! Revise! Staff-family partnerships are not one-time events. Instead, partnership opportunities and activities continue throughout the family's enrollment in Head Start. As the family grows and develops, the staff-family relationship may evolve into one that requires more or less contact depending on the changing desires and needs of the family. Do you

- ❑ Regularly meet with families to revisit, review, and revise their goals and plans for achieving them?
- ❑ Review with the family their strengths, supports, interests, needs, and progress?
- ❑ Work with families to overcome challenges and setbacks?
- ❑ Identify and reinforce family achievements?
- ❑ Follow up with the family to determine whether the kind, quantity, and timeliness of services received met the family's expectations, needs, and circumstances?
- ❑ Celebrate the family's successes?

Suggestions for Growth or Change:

1)

2)

3)

Handout 5: Self-Assessment: Partnering with Families (continued)

Approaches for Working with Families. Contact with a family may be formal or informal and can include regularly scheduled meetings or spontaneous conversations as the parents are involved in program activities. Do you:

- ❑ Help families achieve family partnership agreements by jointly establishing strategies, responsibilities, and timetables?
- ❑ Allow the family to be the senior partner?
- ❑ Regard family members as experts about their family?
- ❑ Serve as a resource for supporting the family?
- ❑ Use formal approaches, including team meetings, written plans, correspondence, or home visits?
- ❑ Allow the family to choose the site of p[illegible]ned visits (the family's home, or community settings such as a church, a park, or a recreation center), as well as the date and the time?
- ❑ Work with families in a casual, easy, or relaxed way, including "checking in" with parents by phone, talking with parents at unexpected times, sending notes home with a child, chatting with parents at the end of the day, or inviting parents to be involved in program activities?
- ❑ Strive to be both flexible and creative?

Suggestions for Growth or Change:

1)

2)

3)

Exploring Family Growth

The key to Head Start's effectiveness has been its comprehensiveness that centers on the family. The child is not pulled away from the family, but the family grows as the child grows.
—Head Start Director, Alabama

Outcomes

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- **Support** the family partnership agreement process by exploring family growth and development with families;
- **Recognize** how families change, grow, and develop over time;
- **Use** the family life cycle to identify family strengths and challenges; and
- **Assess** the impact of significant life events on families.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 2 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed to explore family growth include:

- **The Family.** Each family defines itself. Diversity in family composition is the norm today. Marriage, co-habitation, partnering, birth, adoption, foster- and step-parenting, divorce, and death all influence the composition of "family." An enrolled Head Start family consists of, but is not limited to, a child and a parent(s) or guardian. A broad and inclusive definition of family recognizes all family members, ties, and variations in composition.
- **Family Responsibilities.** Each family is charged with fulfilling certain responsibilities in order for its members to successfully grow and develop. Families have many functions and responsibilities; they must provide their members with food, shelter, clothing, and other basic necessities. Families are also responsible for basic health care and wellness, education and socialization, and family maintenance.
- **Family Growth.** Family growth is the development of the family over time. As families change and evolve, they move through stages of development. The specific path of each family's growth is the result of its composition, culture, and adaptation to the challenges of today's world. This unique path is illustrated by the family life cycle.
- **Family Life Cycle.** The family life cycle is a way of illustrating the family's growth and development over time; it recaps all the events and important occurrences in a family's life. These occurrences, or significant life events, may be life transitions, family-initiated changes, unexpected changes or crises, and traumas.

- **Family Supports.** Family supports are the skills, opportunities, experiences, and resources that help families fulfill their responsibilities, grow and develop, overcome challenges, and achieve success.

Background Information

This module focuses on one interaction of the family partnership agreement process: exploring family growth. The information gathered during the exploration of family growth often provides the foundation for supporting families based on their interests, strengths, goals, and needs—the basis of the family partnership agreement. There are several advantages to exploring family growth. First, the uniqueness of each family is reinforced. Second, family strengths are identified, including family responsibilities, supports, and coping skills. Third, staff recognize the changes of the family over time. Fourth, exploring family growth helps Head Start programs and community partners become aware of and responsive to the challenges of families.

The Family

The dictionary defines "family" as a group of people related by ancestry or marriage, or a group of people living in the same household. However, a family is not defined only by ancestry, marriage, or a defined living space. Diversity in family composition and lifestyle is inherent in today's world. In working with families, staff must move beyond a traditional definition of family to one that recognizes that each family is unique. Head Start realizes that a broad and inclusive definition of family embraces all family ties and variations in composition—recognizing group homes, extended family, adoptive and blended families, foster-parents, and unmarried partners living together as families.

Family Responsibilities

Responsibilities vary from family to family. The priority assigned to each responsibility also varies with each family and is greatly influenced by culture, tradition, and environment. Most families, however, assume the following basic responsibilities:

- **Economic Support.** Meeting life-sustaining needs is considered to be the primary responsibility of families. Therefore, the family is the social unit that provides food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities for its members.

- **Health Care and Wellness.** Meeting the basic health care needs of children and other family members, and caring for sick, mentally or physically disabled, and aged relatives is a crucial function of the family. Another function of the family is to protect its members against emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and social violence.

- **Education and Socialization.** The family is the primary educator of its children and is responsible for transmitting social and cultural values. Social values are transmitted by setting, teaching, and enforcing rules, norms, and appropriate behaviors. Cultural socialization involves transmitting ethnic and religious values and traditions.

- **Family Maintenance.** Families are the main providers of the emotional nurturance, intimacy, understanding, and support that sustains them.

Family Growth

Just as individuals reach new levels of maturity over time, so does the family. Generally, as families grow, they move through five stages[1]: 1) formation, 2) expansion, 3) cooperation, 4) independence, and 5) launching. However, variations in composition (e.g., two-parent, single-parent, step-parent, foster-parent, partners raising children, and extended families living in the same household), as well as cultural and environmental factors, affect each family's development. Families may experience challenges or interruptions in their development, repeat or skip a stage, or be in more than one stage at any given time.

- Formation

  As young adults become independent, they begin to redefine themselves and their families. As this occurs, they often begin to shift away from bonds with parental figures and toward forming their own new family. During this transition, a new family identity emerges that is often marked by a hopeful outlook about the future.

  At the same time, parental figures must adjust and learn to respond to the new family with respect. Unfair expectations of new family members or differences in personal and family values can cause serious conflict.

- Expansion

  The second stage is marked by additions to the family. These additions, which require many changes within the family, include the birth of a child, caring for elderly parents, blending step-family members, and uniting extended families. During this stage, the family must reorganize to include new members. With the arrival of additional members, new family roles and responsibilities are defined, and new systems of support are created.

  Conflicts at this stage can arise regarding children's behavior, parenting responsibilities, parenting styles, finances, and support systems. Families can use supportive resources (within and outside the family system) to

[1] Adapted from Louisiana Department of Social Services, *Family Services Desk Reference: Comprehensive Family Assessment and Case Planning* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services, 1996).

avoid or resolve these conflicts and handle frustration and stress. Seeking to enhance parenting and communication skills, turning to extended family members and friends for support, and finding acceptable ways to reduce stress are strategies that can help families during this stage.

- Cooperation

  During this stage, families must transfer some responsibility of and control over their children to others. As children begin to participate in child care, Head Start, school, or community activities, a natural process of individuation takes place. Children take on roles as students and playmates, with some separated from the full-time care of their parents for the first time. At this stage, school-age children are better able to care for themselves and contribute to the family system that supports them. Parents are often freer of child care responsibilities, providing them greater opportunity to pursue employment, education, or other activities outside the family.

  Challenges in this stage are related primarily to the child's participation in activities outside the family, which promote individual growth. Two beliefs can influence the child's development and contribute to conflicts: 1) the world is unsafe and cannot be trusted to take good care of the child, and 2) the child is an extension of the parents and, therefore, any behavior of the child is a reflection on the parents. Families that are able to trust other people and accept differences among family members develop parent-and-child roles that complement each other.

- Independence

  As children reach adolescence, they begin a process of disengaging from their parents, establishing their own identities, and becoming independent decision makers. At the same time, parents begin to change their parenting role by becoming more flexible and open to negotiation. Family rules and boundaries must be adjusted to allow the adolescent to move in and out of the family system. Tension frequently characterizes this stage as adolescents and parents differ in their ideas of appropriate behaviors and limits.

  The adolescent's search for independence requires movement outward from the family. However, two potential problems exist with this separation: the family can prematurely push the adolescent out, or it can refuse to let the adolescent go. If the family system is able to let the adolescent question parental authority and look outside the family for additional sources of support and identity, parents and adolescents will be able to become independent successfully. In turn, the adolescent will be able to face the adult world with the confidence born of a strong self-identity.

- Launching

  As adolescents become young adults, their independence from parental figures becomes more defined. This stage involves parents letting go of their children by establishing adult-to-adult relationships with them. Parents must learn to support their adult children, and children must give up their dependent role in relation to their parents. With the establishment of these new roles comes an increase of time and energy available for other pursuits. Children nearing adulthood often pursue stronger peer relationships, education, and work, and, perhaps, choose a partner.

  Conflicts arise when adolescents or parents see "launching" as threatening or unacceptable. For some parents, this is a troubling time, and they may experience depression in anticipation of the adolescent's departure from the family. Those who have devoted themselves to parenting may become depressed over the "empty nest." Others may experience feelings of rejection or failure due to rare or infrequent contact with their children. Children, too, may have difficulties at this time. Some may feel troubled by parents whom they see as interfering in their lives or as financial or psychological burdens. Other adolescents may not be able to leave because they see themselves as their parents' sole confidantes or as the mediators of conflicts between their parents. In essence, they believe the family cannot survive without them.

The Family Life Cycle

The family life cycle is a way of illustrating the family's growth and development over time; it recaps all the **significant life events** or important occurrences in a family's life. Significant life events can present both opportunities and challenges to families in meeting their responsibilities. Types of significant life events include:

- **Life Transitions:** Moving from one stage of family development to the next, such as individuals becoming parents, children beginning school, or children leaving home;

- **Family-Initiated Changes:** Major events introduced by the family, such as divorce, returning to school, marriage, co-habitation, moving to a new neighborhood, or finding a new job;

- **Unexpected Changes:** Unanticipated or unforeseen events, such as an unplanned pregnancy, eviction, the onset of a chronic illness, or a sudden job transfer; and

- **Traumas:** A painful emotional or physical experience, such as a serious injury or death of a family member, a natural disaster, or a violent crime.

Family Supports

Family supports are the opportunities, experiences, and resources that help families fulfill their responsibilities, grow and develop, overcome challenges, achieve their goals, and celebrate success. Supports may be internal or external to the family.

- **Internal supports** are the skills, characteristics, mechanisms, or resources that help families cope with change. These supports include family practices and routines that help to buffer some of the impact of significant life events; strengths, such as effective communication, negotiation, parenting, decision making, and coping skills; family history, traditions, culture, and celebrations; economic resources; and family members.

- **External supports** include a full range of informal and formal resources, ranging from social activities to specialized professional services that can help a family meet its responsibilities. External sources of support include personal networks such as friends, co-workers, and neighbors; social and religious institutions and organizations, as well as community groups and recreational facilities; and specialized human services and educational institutions and programs such as schools, Head Start, public and private social service agencies, and early intervention programs.

Activity 2-1: Family Growth

Purpose: To understand the process of family growth and analyze the family life cycle.

Preparation

For this activity, you will need:

- Handout 1: *Family Growth: The Development of the Family Over Time*
- Handout 2: *Family Scenario: A Family Life Cycle*
- Handout 3: *Your Family Life Cycle*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Tell participants that this activity examines the development of the family. Review the importance of exploring family growth as presented in the module's background information. Be sure to include the following points:

   - There are several advantages to exploring family growth:

     — The uniqueness of each family is reinforced;
     — Family strengths are identified;
     — Staff recognize the changes of the family over time; and
     — Exploring family growth helps Head Start programs and community agencies become aware of and responsive to the challenges of families.

   - The information gathered during the exploration of family growth often provides the foundation for supporting families based on their interests, strengths, goals, and needs—the basis of the family partnership agreement.

2. *Review the definition of family.* Discuss the meaning of "family" as presented in this module's key concepts and background information.

3. (a) *Describe the stages of family growth.* Explain that as families grow, they move through five stages of development (formation, expansion, cooperation, independence, and launching); however, the specific path of each family's growth is the result of its composition, culture, and adaption to the challenges of today's world.

   (b) Distribute handout 1 and discuss **part 1**. Carefully review each stage of development. Expand on the five stages of development (part 1) by using the module's background information. Remind participants that families may experience challenges or interruptions in their development, repeat or skip a stage, or be in more than one stage at any given time.

4. (a) *Explore the family life cycle.* Explain that the family life cycle is a way of illustrating the family's growth and development over time; it

recaps all the significant events and important occurrences in a family's life.

(b) Review with the large group the four types of significant life events presented in handout 1, **part 2**. Ask participants to expand upon the examples provided, based on their work or personal experiences.

5. *Conduct a small group exercise.* Divide participants into small groups. Distribute handout 2 and review the instructions with the small groups.

6. (a) *Debrief the exercise.* Reconvene the large group and ask each small group to recap its discussion. Ask the following questions:

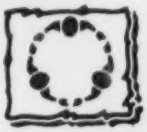
   - What can you learn about families by exploring significant events in their life cycles?
   - How will understanding a family's life cycle help you support that family?

   (b) Distribute handout 3 and ask each participant to chart his or her own family life cycle. Give participants time to compare their family life cycles with the one depicted on handout 2. Have participants reflect on the following:

   - How are the life cycles similar?
   - How are they different?
   - What do the two life cycles suggest to you about ways Head Start and the community could become aware of and responsive to the developmental challenges of families?

7. *Close the activity.* Reinforce that significant life events affect the growth of families; each family's response to significant life events is unique. Stress that discussing significant life events with family members may uncover family strengths, supports, and coping strategies, as well as unresolved challenges. Emphasize that exploring family growth with families is one way for staff to support the family partnership agreement process.

Activity 2-2: Family Responsibilities



Purpose: To assess the impact of significant life events on the family and to identify available supports.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 4: *Family Responsibilities*
- Handout 5: *Impacts and Supports*
- Handout 6: *The Family: Impacts and Supports*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. (a) *Describe family responsibilities.* Explain to participants that families usually take responsibility for economic support, health care and wellness, education and socialization, and family maintenance. Distribute handout 4 and review each area of family responsibility.

   (b) Recording the answers on newsprint, ask the following questions:

   - What opportunities do these responsibilities present to families?
   - What challenges do these responsibilities present to families?

2. (a) *Identify internal and external supports.* State that in order for families to fulfill their responsibilities, grow and develop, overcome challenges, achieve goals, and celebrate success, they often draw on their supports, both internal and external. Present the following points:

   - **Internal supports** are the skills, characteristics, mechanisms, or resources that help families cope with change, including family practices and routines, strengths, family history, traditions, culture, celebrations, economic resources, and family members.
   - **External supports** include a full range of informal and formal resources, ranging from friends and social activities to specialized professional services that can help a family meet its responsibilities.

   (b) Recording the responses on newsprint, ask the following questions:

   - What are some examples of internal economic supports? External economic supports?

   Repeat the above question, discussing each responsibility (i.e., health and wellness, education and socialization, and family maintenance).

3. (a) *Review significant life events.* Briefly review the concept of significant life events as presented in the module's background information. Tell the participants that significant life events can have an

impact on families, presenting both opportunities and challenges, and may require them to draw on both internal and external supports.
(b) Distribute handout 5 and review the example provided in the handout by discussing: 1) how moving, a significant life event, can have an impact on the family; and 2) the supports that the family may need to deal successfully with the move.

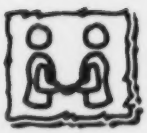
4. *Form small groups.* Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a significant life event. Distribute handout 6 and have participants complete the handout for the assigned event.

> **Trainer Preparation Note:** Examples of significant life events the small groups may discuss include marriage, divorce, co-habitation, child birth, a job transfer or change, unemployment, an unplanned pregnancy, school or training enrollment, death of a family member, or a house fire.

5. *Discuss significant life events.* Reconvene the large group after 20 minutes and have each small group share its findings with the large group.

6. *Close the activity.* Emphasize that staff can assist Head Start families by helping them to recognize the potential impacts surrounding each significant life event and the internal and external supports that they have for coping effectively. Encourage participants to stay up-to-date on community supports and resources available for families.

Activity 2-3: Examining Family Growth



Purpose: To understand the process of family growth and to assess the impact of significant life events on the family and its available supports.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Family Growth: The Development of the Family Over Time*
- Handout 4: *Family Responsibilities*
- Handout 5: *Impacts and Supports*
- Handout 6: *The Family: Impacts and Supports*
- Handout 7: *Family Scenario: The Kelso Family*
- Handout 8: *The Kelso Family Life Cycle*
- Handout 9: *A Family Life Cycle*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

Coach Preparation Note: This coaching activity involves two sessions and two homework assignments.

- In Session 1, you will work with participants to study the process of family growth and analyze the family life cycle. As homework, you will ask participants to partner with a Head Start family and chart its life cycle by identifying significant life events.
- Session 2 involves a discussion of family responsibilities and internal/external supports. You will ask participants to work with the same family as in Session 1 to identify the potential impacts and supports available to the family.

Session 1

1. *Introduce the activity.* Tell participants that this activity involves two sessions and examines the development of the family. Review the importance of exploring family growth as presented in the module's background information. Be sure to include the following points:

   - There are several advantages to exploring family growth:

     — The uniqueness of each family is reinforced;
     — Family strengths are identified;
     — Staff recognize the changes of the family over time; and
     — Exploring family growth helps Head Start programs and community partners become aware of and responsive to the challenges of families.

   - The information gathered during the exploration of family growth often provides the foundation for supporting families based on their interests, strengths, goals, and needs—the basis of the family partnership agreement.

2. *Review the definition of family.* Discuss the meaning of "family" as presented in this module's key concepts and background information.

3. *Describe family growth.* State that as families grow they move through five stages of development. Distribute handout 1 and review **part 1** of the handout. Use the information on the handout to expand on the material below.

   - The specific path of each family's growth is the result of its composition, culture, and adaption to the challenges of today's world.
   - Families may experience challenges or interruptions in their development, repeat or skip a stage, or be in more than one stage at any given time.

4. *Discuss the family life cycle.* State that the family life cycle depicts the family's growth and development over time; it recaps all the significant life events and important occurrences in a family's life. Explain that significant life events can be seen as either challenges or opportunities. Review and discuss the four types of significant life events presented in handout 1, **part 2**.

5. (a) *Practice identifying significant life events.* Distribute handout 7. Have participants read the family scenario.

   (b) Distribute handout 8. Using the handout, ask participants to finish charting the Kelso family's life cycle by identifying the significant life events described in the vignette.

   (c) Debrief the exercise by discussing the following:

   - What can you learn about families from exploring significant events in their life cycles?
   - How will understanding a family's life cycle help you support that family?

6. *Practice exploring family growth.* Distribute handout 9. Have participants choose a Head Start family they know. As homework, ask participants to meet with the family and chart its life cycle by identifying significant life events. Handout 9 can be used as a guide for this process. Instruct participants to discuss with the family the effects of the significant life events and what the family learned from them. Remind participants to make a copy of all written materials for the family. Set a date and time to meet again.

Session 2

1. *Debrief the homework assignment.* Have participants recap the experience of charting a Head Start family's life cycle. Have participants point out strengths (supports and coping skills) that they now see in the family and how the family has changed over time. Discuss any concerns or difficulties experienced during the activity, as well as any challenges that emerged during the activity.

2. *Examine Family Responsibilities.* Distribute handout 4 and review family responsibilities. Explain to participants that families usually take responsibility for economic support, health care and wellness, education and socialization, and family maintenance.

3. *Identify supports.* Establish that families have two sources of support.

   - **Internal supports** are the skills, characteristics, mechanisms, or resources that help families cope with change, including family practices and routines, strengths, family history, traditions, culture, celebrations, economic resources, and family members.

- **External supports** include a full range of informal and formal resources, ranging from friends and social activities to specialized professional services that can help a family meet its responsibilities.

4. (a) *Complete a practice exercise.* Briefly review the concept of significant life events and the Kelso Family scenario (handouts 7 and 8) discussed in Session 1.

   (b) Tell the participants that significant life events can have an impact families and their responsibilities, presenting both opportunities and challenges, and may require them to draw on their internal and external supports. Distribute handout 5. Review the example provided in the handout by discussing: 1) how moving impacted the Kelsos; and 2) the supports that were available.

   (c) Distribute handout 6. Instruct participants to choose another significant life event from The Kelso Family Life Cycle (handout 8). Using this significant life event, have participants complete handout 6.

5. *Debrief the exercise.* Have participants recap the experience. Next, discuss participants' concerns or difficulties with this activity.

6. *Practice identifying opportunities, challenges, and supports.* Have participants focus again on the Head Start family they chose in Session 1. Using the family life cycle developed in Session 1 (handout 9), instruct participants to select a significant life event. Assign homework to assess the potential impacts on the family and the internal and external supports available to the family. Handout 6 may be used as a guide for this process.

7. *Debrief the homework assignment.* When you meet with participants again, review the impacts and supports identified in the selected family.

8. *Close the activity.* Emphasize that significant life events can have an impact on the growth and development of families; each family's reaction and response to a significant life event is unique. State that by identifying significant life events, staff can recognize potential impacts, build on strengths, reinforce internal supports, and connect families with appropriate external supports. Emphasize that exploring family growth is one way for staff to support the family partnership agreement process. In closing, encourage staff to use the life cycle strategy in their work with families and to stay up-to-date on community supports and resources.

Next Step: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 2 are presented below. After completing Module 2, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually or as part of a team.

- **Learning About Family Diversity**

  Using handout 3 from this module, have staff and Head Start parents develop life cycle charts. Have parents and staff discuss: 1) similarities and differences in their life cycle charts; 2) the information these charts give to staff and families; and 3) the different ways these life cycle charts can be used to identify and respond to the challenges of Head Start families. Encourage the group to share their life cycle findings with other members of the Head Start community.

- **Assessing the Impact of Significant Life Events**

  Have staff watch a movie with a family story (for example, *Ordinary People, Kramer vs Kramer, Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, Parenthood, Dim Sum, Crooklyn*) and ask them to pick a significant life event depicted in the movie. Ask staff to discuss the impact of this event on the family. Handout 6 may assist staff in completing this activity.

- **Connecting with External Supports**

  Make a list of several agencies in the community that provide support to families. From the list, have staff choose an agency and arrange an interview with a staff member to discuss the agency's supports, services, and referral process. Ask staff to share the information with co-workers who visited other agencies, and discuss similarities and differences in agency services and how the services might be useful to families.

Handout 1: Family Growth: The Development of the Family Over Time

Overview

Exploring family growth provides staff a framework for 1) realizing that each family is unique, 2) identifying family strengths, including family supports and coping skills, 3) recognizing the changes of a family over time, and 4) helping Head Start programs and community agencies become aware of and responsive to the needs of families. The information gathered often provides the foundation for supporting families based on their interests, strengths, goals, and needs—the basis for the family partnership agreement.

PART 1: Five Stages of Development

Generally, as families grow, they move through five stages of development.[2] Families may experience challenges or interruptions in their development, repeat or skip a stage, or be in more than one stage at any given time.

- **Formation:** Creating a new family identity.
- **Expansion:** Adding new members to the family.
- **Cooperation:** Transferring some responsibility for and control over children to others.
- **Independence:** Allowing children to become more independent and establish their own identities as adults.
- **Launching:** Letting go of children and establishing adult-to-adult relationships with them.

PART 2: The Family Life Cycle

The family life cycle is a way of illustrating the family's growth and development; it recaps all the significant life events or important occurrences in a family's life. Four types of **significant life events** include:

- **Life Transitions:** Moving from one stage of development to the next, such as individuals becoming parents, children beginning school, or children leaving home;
- **Family-Initiated Changes:** Major events introduced by the family, such as divorce, returning to school, marriage, co-habitation, moving to a new neighborhood, or finding a new job;
- **Unexpected Changes:** Unanticipated or unforeseen events, such as an unplanned pregnancy, eviction, the onset of a chronic illness, or a sudden job transfer; and
- **Traumas:** A painful emotional or physical experience, such as a serious injury or death of a family member, a natural disaster, or a violent crime.

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[2] Adapted from Louisiana Department of Social Services, *Family Services Desk Reference: Comprehensive Family Assessment and Case Planning* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services, 1996).

Handout 2: Family Scenario: A Family Life Cycle

Instructions

In small groups, examine and discuss the family's life cycle. What can you learn about families from exploring significant events in their life cycles? How will understanding a family's life cycle help you support that family?

- Steve and Deb have a sixth child
- Peter gets a part-time job
- Steve's oldest child leaves for college
- All children attend/enroll in a new school
- Steve gets promotion and raise
- Family moves to a new home
- Deb marries Steve, father of 3
- Deb becomes employed
- Mike Jr. and Peter attend EHS and HS
- Birth of second child, Mike Jr.
- Mike and Deb's relationship ends
- Deb begins job training
- Deb obtains her GED
- Birth of first child, Peter
- Co-habitation of Deb and Mike

Handout 3: Your Family Life Cycle

Instructions

Develop your own family life cycle by recording significant life events on the chart below. Compare your family life cycle with the one depicted in handout 2. Reflect on the following: How are the life cycles similar? How are they different? What do the two life cycles suggest to you about ways Head Start and the community can become aware of and responsive to the developmental challenges of families?

Handout 4: Family Responsibilities[1]

Overview

Families have many responsibilities. The priority families assign to each responsibility varies and is greatly influenced by culture, tradition, and environment. Most families assume responsibility for the following:

- **Economic Support**

  Meeting life-sustaining needs is a critical family responsibility. The family must be able to provide food, clothing, shelter, and many other necessities for its members.

- **Health Care and Wellness**

  Meeting the basic health care needs of children and other family members and caring for sick, mentally or physically disabled, and aged relatives are other family responsibilities. Families also have the responsibility to protect their members from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and social violence.

- **Education and Socialization**

  The family is the primary educator of its children and is responsible for transmitting social and cultural values. Social values are transmitted through setting, teaching, and enforcing rules, norms, and appropriate behaviors. Cultural socialization involves reinforcing ethnic, and religious values and traditions within the family.

- **Family Maintenance**

  Families are the main providers of the emotional nurturance, intimacy, understanding, and support that sustains them.

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[1]Adapted with permission from T. Ooms and S. Preister, *A Strategy for Strengthening Families: Using Family Criteria in Policymaking and Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: Family Impact Seminar, 1988).

Handout 5: Impacts and Supports

Overview

Significant life events are important occurrences in a family's life. These events can have an impact on families, providing both opportunities and challenges. In order for families to fulfill their responsibilities, grow and develop, overcome challenges, achieve goals, and celebrate success, they often draw on their supports, both internal and external. Review the potential impacts and supports associated with the significant life event of "moving."

Significant Life Event: MOVING

Family Responsibility	Impacts		Supports	
	Opportunities	*Challenges*	*Internal*	*External*
Economic Support	Larger home, decreased transportation costs	Moving costs, security deposits, utility hook-ups, higher monthly rent	Family members, budgeting skills	Bank loans, rent subsidy, help from friends
Health Care and Wellness	Decreased commute, safer neighborhood, variety of health resources	Stress, exhaustion, adapting to new community norms, finding health resources	Self-defense skills, practicing preventive medicine	Police, Neighborhood Watch, Head Start, schools, health clinics and hospitals
Education and Socialization	New friends and neighborhood, better school system	Difficulty fitting in with new neighbors, conflicts between cultural groups	Communication skills, routines and rules, traditions	PTA, Head Start, social clubs, after-school programs, community recreation programs
Family Maintenance	Developing new ties and supports, stronger family bonds	Interrupted routines, change in family routines	Extended family, communication and coping skills, anger management skills, time out for fun	Religious and cultural organizations, support groups

Handout 6: The Family: Impacts and Supports

Instructions

After choosing a significant life event, identify: 1) how the event can have an impact on family, providing both opportunities and challenges; and 2) the supports, both internal and external, that the family may require to deal successfully with the event. Record your answers in the chart below.

	Significant Life Event:			
Family Responsibility	**Impacts**		**Supports**	
	Opportunities	*Challenges*	*Internal*	*External*
Economic Support				
Health Care and Wellness				
Education and Socialization				
Family Maintenance				

Handout 7: Family Scenario: The Kelso Family

Instructions

Read the following family scenario. You will use the information on the Kelsos to: 1) identify significant life events; 2) practice charting the family's life cycle; 3) assess the event's opportunities or challenges; and 4) identify the internal and external supports.

The Kelso Family

Mr. Kelso:	Father of three
Mrs. Kelso:	Mother of three, deceased
Liza Kelso:	Mr. Kelso's sister
Milt and Aimee Kelso:	Mr. Kelso's brother and sister-in-law
Laura Kelso:	Age 16
Tim Kelso:	Age 10
Stella Kelso:	Age 4

After 17 years of marriage, Mrs. Kelso died suddenly, leaving three children to be raised by her husband. Recently, Mr. Kelso's sister, Liza, moved in with the family to help with the children. Despondent and overwhelmed by the loss of his wife, Mr. Kelso threw himself into his work and was awarded a promotion for his efforts. Even though his new job is very demanding, he is usually able to get home before bedtime to say good night to his children. Life insurance money, along with a raise at work, has allowed Mr. Kelso to move his family out of an apartment and into a small house in a suburban neighborhood.

The Head Start teacher has noticed that Stella's behavior has dramatically changed since the death of her mother. Stella refuses to listen and has temper tantrums whenever she doesn't get her way. The Head Start teacher has spoken with the family because, no matter what the teacher does, Stella seems to get angrier and angrier by the day. Moreover, at least three nights a week at home, Stella wakes up crying. When this happens, no one gets enough sleep. On Liza's advice, Mr. Kelso has decided to talk with his brother about taking Stella to live with him.

Tim is also having a difficult time adjusting to the loss of his mother and is feeling angry. On the first day at his new school, Tim refused to go, lashed out at Liza, and kicked a hole in the wall of his bedroom. Laura also misses her mother terribly. She is a junior in high school and didn't want to change schools.

You have never worked with the Kelso family and are unaware of the family's current situation. You are planning a home visit and want to use the strategy of charting the family's life cycle to help you and the family identify strengths, coping skills, and supports.

Handout 8: The Kelso Family Life Cycle

Instructions

Using the information presented in handouts 1 and 7, complete the Kelso family life cycle by identifying significant life events. Record the significant life events in the chart below. Be prepared to discuss the following: What can you learn about families from exploring significant events in their life cycles? How will understanding a family's life cycle help you support that family?

- Mrs. Kelso dies suddenly
- Stella Kelso is born
- Children start school
- Mrs. Kelso volunteers at Head Start
- Children enroll in Head Start
- Mr. Kelso gets a new job
- Tim Kelso is born
- Mr. Kelso gets computer training
- Laura Kelso is born
- Mr. and Mrs. Kelso marry

Handout 9: A Family Life Cycle

Instructions

Choose a Head Start family you know. In a joint effort with the family, chart the family's life cycle by identifying significant life events. Discuss the significant life events with the family and how they impacted the family. Along the way, draw out and reinforce the internal and external supports that helped the family grow and develop.

Family Name:_____

Making Family Goals a Reality

So many families who enroll in Head Start feel that their lives happen to them...We try to help them see that they have a say in what happens...they can set a goal, a direction, then go after it.
—Head Start Staff, New Hampshire

Outcomes

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- **Help** families identify goals that are realistic, specific, time-limited, and results-oriented; and
- **Make** plans with families for achieving their goals.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 3 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed to help families identify and achieve their goals include:

- **Goals.** Goals identify what the family hopes to attain. A clearly articulated and defined goal statement has four characteristics; it is: 1) realistic, 2) specific, 3) time-limited, and 4) results-oriented.
- **Goal Setting Strategies.** The strategies of "visioning" and "creating a family picture" can help families articulate and define their goals. Goal-setting is an ongoing process because the family's goals change and evolve over time.
- **Achieving Family Goals.** After the goals are identified, staff should encourage the family to make them a reality. Staff should provide families opportunities to create plans that describe the strategies, responsibilities, and timetables for goal achievement.

Background Information

Each family determines the direction of family partnership agreements. Goal setting is one type of interaction that can occur during the family partnership agreement process. Staff should initiate family goal setting by building on the information explored by the staff and family—their strengths, supports, achievements, skills, and challenges—and inviting families to look toward the future. Staff, using the strategies of visioning and creating a family picture, encourage families to identify their goals. Once the family's goals for the future are identified, staff offer parents opportunities and supports to make its goals a reality.

Identifying Family Goals

Goals state what the family hopes to attain. The strategies, discussed below, can be used by staff to help families identify their goals.

- **Visioning.** Visioning is a strategy that can bring family members together to recognize and share their hopes for the future. Family members are

encouraged to look beyond their day-to-day concerns and develop a mental picture of their desires for the family. Visioning might seem to be a "pie in the sky" approach. However, it is simpler to get where you want to go when you know where that is. Through the visioning process, family members are able to develop a shared sense of family direction that can inspire them to work together in articulating and defining family goals.

- **Creating the Family Picture.** After visioning, families begin to define what they want to achieve by drawing or writing their dreams on paper. Creating a picture enables the family to understand not only its hopes, but also those of the individual family members. The family picture depicts the family's goals.

For family goals to be meaningful, they should be stated in terms that are clear and understandable to everyone involved. Goals should also be positively stated, that is, they must indicate what the family will do, not what the family will stop doing. Further, to help ensure the family's success in achieving the goals, goal statements must be: 1) realistic, 2) specific, 3) time-limited, and 4) results-oriented.

- **Realistic.** Goals must be based upon realistic expectations; that is, outcomes or changes that are truly possible for the family to achieve and within the family's control. For example, it is not realistic for any family to expect to be totally free of conflict or stress. However, it is realistic for a family to expect to acquire skills for dealing more effectively with conflict and stress.

- **Specific.** Goals must clearly describe what the family wants to achieve in observable terms. For example, if a family expresses the desire for family members to stop fighting, a specific goal for the immediate future might read, "Family members will learn and use non-harmful ways of expressing anger, including calling 'time out' and using positive methods of child discipline." With the behaviors specified, the family will know when the goal has been achieved.

- **Time-Limited.** A goal must establish the time limits for achievement; that is, the point in time when the family can reasonably expect the goal to be completed. For example, with resources available to teach a family anger management skills, a reasonable target date for achieving the goal presented above might be three to four weeks.

- **Results-Oriented.** A family goal must be results-oriented; that is, it must be stated in a way that makes it possible for family members to agree on its achievement. For example, a goal that states "the Jones family will spend more time together and improve their communication skills" is left undefined. Goals that contain this type of wording are neither measurable nor observable. Unless some specific improvements are spelled out, family members may never be able to agree on what they consider to be "improved" or on how much "more time" is enough. A results-oriented

goal might read: "The Jones family will devote at least three hours a week to positive family interaction (doing homework, playing, working in the garden, or sitting and talking together)."

Achieving Family Goals

Once the family's goals for the future are identified, staff should encourage parents to make them a reality. This module presents a six-step approach to help families achieve their goals. This approach describes not only the family's goals, but also the strategies, responsibilities, and timetables for achieving them. It is important to remember that one approach will not work for every family. Therefore, staff must individualize their efforts with families, allowing for differences among families in their goals and how they want to achieve them. A six-step approach involves:

- **Step 1: Review Goal Statements and Incorporate Pre-Existing Plans.** This step involves reviewing the goal statements developed by the family to make sure that they are accurate and encompass the four characteristics of a clearly articulated and defined goal. It also involves, where appropriate, reviewing and building on all other family agreements, including Individual Family Service Plans, Individual Education Plans, Individual Health Plans, transition plans, and plans developed with other community partners. This step builds focus, clarifies goals, and avoids duplication of effort or conflict with any pre-existing family plans developed through the Head Start program or other community agencies.

- **Step 2: Recognize Skills, Resources, and Supports.** This step involves identifying family and community resources and supports that are available to help the family achieve its goal. This is a time of creativity, for laying out all the possibilities, and for finding out how the family would like to proceed. Once the resources and supports are identified, the staff and family may ask other members to join the partnership and support the family in achieving its goals. If members are added to the team, the family's goal should be reviewed so that all members understand what they will be working to achieve. At this point, the team should identify all the skills that its members possess. This step ensures that all skills, resources, and supports available for achieving the goal are considered.

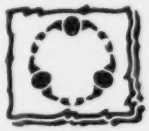
- **Step 3: Identify Strategies.** Step 3 involves identifying concrete strategies for achieving the family goals. The strategies should not be too complex, nor require several steps or months to accomplish. If complexity cannot be avoided, the strategy should be broken down into "doable" activities that bring a sense of accomplishment and success along the way. Identifying strategies builds team consensus and ensures that the strategies are within the realm of possibility.

- **Step 4: Assign Responsibility.** Step 4 involves assigning the responsibility for the identified strategies to team members based on the skills, resources, and supports previously identified. If there is a strategy that requires a skill no member possesses, or a resource to which the team doesn't have access, the team focuses its attention on overcoming the barrier. Assigning responsibility for the strategies to team members creates a sense of ownership, builds on strengths, promotes the development of new skills and competencies, distributes the work, reduces the risk of team members becoming overwhelmed, and makes follow-up and progress review manageable.

- **Step 5: Create a Timetable.** In step 5, the team identifies the completion date(s) for each assigned strategy. Reasonable time frames for accomplishing the strategies are critical. This step holds the team accountable and makes assessing progress manageable. Copies of written plans should be made for the family and all team members.

- **Step 6: Provide Follow-Up and Progress Review.** Because identifying family goals is an ongoing process, step 6 involves continuously updating, checking, and refining or setting goals. Staff should review, record, and reinforce the family's progress toward goal achievement, providing additional support where appropriate. In addition, the process of following up with a family through formal and informal opportunities helps staff determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of the services family members received met the family's expectations, needs, and circumstances. Not only does follow-up keep team members on task and on time, but it also provides an opportunity for staff and families to revisit and revise the goal statements, ensures program accountability, recognizes family achievements, and reviews the provided services and referral outcomes.

Activity 3-1: Identifying Family Goals



Purpose: To practice strategies for helping families define their goals during the family partnership agreement process.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Identifying Family Goals*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain that identifying family goals is an ongoing process. Tell participants that this activity explores goal-setting strategies.

2. *Present two goal-setting strategies.* Distribute handout 1 and review with participants the strategies of visioning and creating a family picture as explained in **part 1** and **part 2**. Use the module's key concepts and background information sections to expand on the discussion.

3. (a) *Practice visioning.* Guide participants through visioning by saying:

   "We are going to practice the strategy of visioning. This involves reading several passages and a series of questions to help you think about your family's future. In order for this to be effective, relax, leave the present behind, focus on the future, and experience the luxury of having time to think only about your hopes and dreams."

> **Trainer Preparation Note:** Encourage participants to create a mental picture during the visioning exercise. Visioning is a thoughtful process that may require considerable time. When reading the script, do not rush the participants. Allow some time for participants to relax. It is important to read slowly and pause between each phrase.

   (b) Ask the participants to get into a comfortable position and to close their eyes. Say:

   "Relax. Take a deep breath. The wind is blowing slightly. You are calm. You are safe and comfortable. There are no daily worries. There is silence. There are no voices. There are no phones. There are no doorbells."

   "Take another deep breath. I want you to look two years into the future. You can see your family. Family members are a little older, a little wiser, and have accomplished many things. Your family has experienced good times and overcome difficulties. It is the perfect time. Everyone in your family is exactly where they want to be, doing all the things they want to do. All of your family dreams have come true."

"Draw a picture in your mind. Where are you? Where are your family members? What is everyone doing? What are they wearing? What are they saying? How do you and your family feel? How is your family different? How is your family the same? You have just created your family picture. Now, open your eyes."

4. *Create the family picture.* Explain to participants that they will now put the mental image created during the visioning process on paper. Encourage participants to complete the family picture (**part 2** of handout 1) by drawing or writing phrases that describe the family picture.

> **Trainer Preparation Note:** Reinforce that visioning and creating a family picture are not the only way to initiate family goal setting. State that families can draw, write, or describe their plans for the future; it is important to use strategies appropriate to individual families.

5. (a) *Describe the goals.* Write the definition of a goal on newsprint and post: **A GOAL IDENTIFIES WHAT THE FAMILY HOPES TO ATTAIN**. Discuss the meaning of the term "goal" by asking the following questions:

   - What do you think this definition means?
   - What makes a goal attainable?

   (b) Tell participants that their family pictures depict goals which now must be expressed in words. Give the following example to participants:

   "If in your family picture you drew a new home, your goal statement may be to move to a new neighborhood, to save enough money to buy a new home, or to rent a larger house."

   (c) Have participants write their goals in handout 1, **part 3**.

6. (a) *Develop goal statements.* Review the bullets in **part 4** of handout 1 and discuss with participants that a clearly articulated and defined goal incorporates four characteristics (realistic, specific, time-limited, and results-oriented). Using the module's background information, discuss each characteristic.

   (b) On handout 1, **part 4**, instruct the participants to rewrite the goals previously identified in **part 3**. Remind participants to incorporate the four characteristics of a goal statement.

   (c) Instruct participants to pick a partner. Have partners explain their family pictures and their goal statements to each other. Instruct the

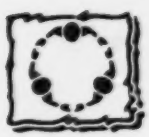
partners to assess whether the goal statements contain the four characteristics.

7. *Debrief the activity.* Ask participants to discuss their goal-setting experience by asking:

   - What did you learn about yourself or your family from this activity?
   - How are the strategies you practiced different from those you typically use with families?
   - What do you see as the advantages of these strategies?
   - What opportunities do you have to use this process in your work with families?

8. *Close the activity.* Close the activity by reminding staff that when setting goals, the family is the senior partner; this ensures that the family owns the goals and makes the commitment necessary to achieve them. Recap the strategies for identifying family goals (visioning and creating the family picture) and the characteristics of well-defined goals. Encourage staff to practice these strategies with the families they work with.

Activity 3-2: Achieving the Family's Goals



Purpose: To apply a six-step approach toward family goal achievement.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *Family Scenario: The Greene Family*
- Handout 3: *A Six-Step Approach for Achieving Family Goals*
- Handout 4: *Role Play: Achieving the Greene Family's Goals*
- Handout 5: *Worksheet for Achieving Family Goals*
- Handout 6: *Role Play: Observations and Discussion Guidelines*
- Role Play Name Tags
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. (a) *Initiate the activity.* Post a sheet of newsprint on the wall and distribute handout 2. Have participants read the handout. Explain that this is the only information available about the Greene family. Recording answers on newsprint, ask participants the following question:

   - What goals might the Greenes identify?

Trainer Preparation Note: Participants may identify the Greene family goals as: moving to a larger home, job training, parenting classes, counseling for Ellen, treating Wesley's asthma, having Mr. Greene quit smoking, etc.

(b) Once the group has finished listing the Greene family's goals, ask: "How many of you believe the first goal on our list should be the family's number-one priority?" Have participants vote for the identified goal through a show of hands. Repeat the process for each goal listed. Record the voting results.

2. *Explain the role of Head Start in goal setting.* Use the following remarks as a guide:

"This exercise was intended to help you clarify your role in family goal setting. As you can see, the Greenes have numerous goals and we could not agree on the number-one priority. This is because we are not a member of the Greene family. Our role is not to set nor establish priorities for the family's goals; rather, our role is to facilitate these processes. Regardless of our personal views, it is the family's right to identify its goals and priorities. Head Start staff, however, can be instrumental in the family's identification and achievement of goals."

"We work to help families improve the quality of their lives. To this end, we need to be able to provide the kinds of information and to ask the kinds of questions that will guide the family in making the best possible decisions. Our role is to help families set and achieve their goals."

3. (a) *Outline a six-step approach for achieving family goals.* Explain that once the family's goals for the future are identified, staff should encourage parents to make them a reality. Include the following points in the presentation:

- Head Start families vary with regard to their need or readiness for staff involvement in achieving family goals.
- Families have the right to decide when and how they want Head Start involved in their pursuit of family goals.
- It is important to remember that one approach will not work for every family. Therefore, staff must individualize their efforts with families, allowing for differences among families in their goals and approaches for achieving them. Any approach used should address not only the family's goals, but also its strategies, responsibilities, and timetables.

(b) Distribute handout 3. Review with participants a six-step approach for achieving family goals, as presented in handout 3 and the module's

background information. Emphasize that this approach provides staff with a **process** for working with families, other Head Start staff, and community partners to help families achieve their goals.

Trainer Preparation Note: Remind participants that staff cannot achieve the family's goals. Rather, the role of staff is to facilitate the process and to help the family connect with available resources and supports.

4. (a) *Introduce a role play exercise.* Ask participants to take a few moments to review the information previously presented on the Greene family (handout 2). Next, divide the participants into small groups, each comprised of eight to ten members, to role play a visit with the Greene family. Have groups appoint a facilitator.

Trainer Preparation Note: For each group, make name tags identifying Ms. Roxy White, Mr. Jon Greene, Mrs. Tania Greene, Wesley Nash, and Ellen Greene. Using Handout 4, copy and cut role play scripts for each group.

(b) Distribute to each facilitator one copy of handout 4, copies of handouts 5 and 6, role play name tags, and role play scripts. Instruct facilitators to go over the directions with their groups. Note that the groups may find handouts 5 and 6 useful. Tell the groups to begin work.

5. *Call time in 45 minutes and debrief the role play.* Ask each group to share its reactions and key points of discussion. If necessary, use handout 6 to spur discussion. Process the activity by discussing the following questions with the large group:

   - What feelings or reactions did you have during the role play?
   - How are the plans of each group similar? Different? Why?
   - How would you follow up with this family and review its progress toward achieving its goal?
   - What suggestions do you have for revising the six-step approach to make it more appropriate for the families you work with?

6. *Close the activity.* Remind participants that once the family's goals for the future are identified, staff should encourage parents to make their goals a reality. Reinforce that Head Start families vary with regard to their need or readiness for staff involvement in achieving family goals and that there is no one way to help families attain their goals.

Activity 3-3: Creating the Future

Purpose: To practice using strategies to identify and achieve family goals as part of the family partnership agreement process.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Identifying Family Goals*
- Handout 3: *A Six-Step Approach for Achieving Family Goals*
- Handout 5: *Worksheet for Achieving Family Goals*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

> **Coach Preparation Note:** This coaching activity involves two sessions with two homework assignments on making family goals a reality.
>
> - In Session 1, you and participants will explore two strategies to help families identify and set family goals.
> - Session 2 involves an examination of the approaches for achieving family goals.

Session 1

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain that there are numerous strategies to help families identify their goals. State that in this session participants will learn the strategies of visioning and creating a family picture as they work with a family to identify its goals.

2. *Examine the strategies of visioning and creating a family picture.* With participants, discuss the strategies of visioning and creating a family picture, as explained in the key concepts and background information sections of this module.

> **Coach Preparation Note:** Reinforce that visioning and creating a family picture are not the only way to initiate family goal setting. State that families can draw, write, or describe their plans for the future; it is important to adapt these strategies to individual families.

3. *Develop goals and define goal statements.* Discuss the definition of a "goal" and the four characteristics of a clearly articulated goal statement: realistic, specific, time-limited, and results-oriented. Use the module's background information to enhance the discussion.

4. *Have participants practice family goal setting.* Distribute and review handout 1 with participants. Explain to participants that this handout will

help them complete a homework assignment. Tell participants to choose a Head Start family, family member, or a close friend. As homework, participants should guide the family, family member, or friend through the visioning process (**part 1**) and help the family or individual create a family picture (**part 2**). To complete the exercise, ask participants to assist the family, family member, or friend as they set realistic, time-limited, specific, results-oriented goals (**part 3** and **part 4**). Set a date and time to meet again.

> **Coach Preparation Note:** Emphasize to participants that when working with families, the staff role is one of facilitator. Staff should not set the family's goals. Instead, they must help the family articulate and define its own goals.

Session 2

1. *Debrief the homework assignment.* Review and discuss participants' goal-setting experiences. Ask participants to focus on the process and not on the content. Ask the following questions to start discussion:

   - How would you describe your experience?
   - What did you learn from it?
   - How do the strategies you tried compare to the ones you usually use with Head Start families?
   - What concerns, if any, do you have about using these strategies in your work with families?

2. *Introduce the session.* Explain that once the family's goals for the future are identified, staff should encourage parents to make the goals a reality. Make the following points:

   - Head Start families vary with regard to their need or readiness for staff involvement in achieving family goals.
   - Families have the right to decide when and how they want Head Start involved in their pursuit of family goals.
   - It is important to remember that one approach will not work for every family. Therefore, staff must individualize their efforts with families, allowing for differences among families in their goals and approaches for achieving them. Any approach used should address not only the family's goals, but also its strategies, responsibilities, and timetables.

3. *Outline a six-step approach for achieving family goals.* Distribute handout 3. Use the module's background information to expand on the handout. State that this approach provides staff with a **process** for

working with families, other Head Start staff, and community partners to help families achieve their goals.

4. *Assign homework.* As homework, ask participants to continue the partnership with the Head Start family, family member, or friend from Session 1. Instruct participants to help them achieve their goals by developing strategies, responsibilities, and timetables. State that handout 5 can assist them in the process. Set a date and time to debrief the homework.

5. *Debrief the homework.* When meeting with participants discuss the process and the outcomes of the homework. Ask:

   - How did the family member or friend respond?
   - What did you learn from the experience that you can use in your work with other families?

6. *Close the activity.* Congratulate participants for trying new goal-setting strategies. Remind participants that once the family's goals for the future are identified, they should encourage parents to make the goals a reality. Reinforce that Head Start families vary with regard to their interest or readiness for staff involvement in achieving family goals and that there is no one way for families to attain their goals. Reinforce that follow-up and reviewing the family's progress are essential components of family goal setting.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 3 are presented below. After completing Module 3, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually or as part of a team.

- **Planning for the Future**

  Encourage staff to continue identifying goals by completing handout 1 with their own families. Then, have staff work with their families to develop a plan for achieving their goals (handouts 3 and 5 will be of assistance). When the staff meet with the trainer or coach, discuss the following: How was the experience? What was easy about doing it? What was hard about doing it? What was learned? What strategies can the staff person use in working with Head Start families? What insights does this experience suggest for continuing professional development?

- **Identifying Goals for the Head Start Program**

  At a staff retreat or monthly meeting, get staff involved in helping the Head Start program set its goals. Handout 1 will assist in planning the activity. Staff may first want to identify his or her individual goals for the program, and then work together to select the program goals. Encourage staff to meet again to develop a written plan for achieving the program's goals (see handouts 3 and 5).

- **Celebrating the Achievements**

  Host a family forum and celebration to recognize success in achieving individual and family goals. Ask family members to share stories about their goal achievements. Celebrate each family's success with mementos for the family storybook, awards, or certificates of congratulations. After recognizing each family, end the evening with a reception. Encourage families to network with each to find supports for achieving their current or new goals.

Handout 1: Identifying Family Goals

Overview

This handout describes strategies for helping families or individuals set goals. Use this handout and the instructions under each step to guide you as you practice goal setting.

Part 1: Visioning

- Visioning is creating a mental picture to pinpoint what the family wants to attain.
- Visioning is a powerful, sometimes difficult experience. Families may find it hard to put their day-to-day struggles aside and talk about their hopes for the future.
- Initiate the visioning process by engaging family members in conversations about their future. Questions to ask include:
  - ✔ What do you want for your family?
  - ✔ What do you want for yourself?
  - ✔ What activities are occurring?
  - ✔ What feelings are being expressed?
  - ✔ How can you achieve this vision?
  - ✔ What do you want to do?

Part 2: Creating the Family Picture

- The family picture depicts the family's goals.
- Families begin to define what they want to achieve by drawing/writing their dreams on paper or describing their dreams to others.
- Creating a picture enables the family to understand its hopes and the hopes of individual family members.

Handout 1: Identifying Family Goals (continued)

Part 2: Creating the Family Picture (continued)

Instructions

Create a family picture by drawing or writing key phrases in the frame below that describe the mental picture generated during the visioning exercise. This picture should show the life you want for your family. If you are uncomfortable drawing or writing, feel free to create a family picture by discussing and sharing your thoughts of your family's future with others.

Handout 1: Identifying Family Goals (continued)

Part 3: Defining Goals

Instructions

Translate the family picture depicted in part 2 into words or goals—what the family hopes to attain. Write the goals on the lines below.

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Part 4: Developing Goal Statements

A clearly articulated and defined goal statement has four characteristics[1]:

- **Realistic.** Goals must be truly possible for the family to achieve and within its control.
- **Specific.** Goals must be clearly stated and measurable.
- **Time-Limited.** Goals must permit the family to recognize success within a certain time frame.
- **Results-Oriented.** Goals must be stated in a way that makes it possible for family members to agree on their achievement, the goals must give some idea of how much must be done to meet the need or achieve the desired outcome.

Instructions

Rewrite the goals outlined above (part 3) into clearly articulated and defined goal statements. Remember to incorporate the four characteristics. Write the goal statements on the lines below.

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

[1]Adapted from the US Department of Health and Human Services, *Head Start Social Services Training Manual* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, 1989).

Handout 2: Family Scenario: The Greene Family

Instructions

Read the following scenario and identify the goals you believe the Greenes might want to achieve.

The Greene Family

Jon Greene:	Father of three, janitor	Wesley Nash:	Age 13
Tania Greene:	Mother of four, homemaker	Ellen Greene:	Age 10
Ricky Nash:	Father of Wesley, bank loan officer	Jim Greene:	Age 2

Mr. Jon Greene makes minimum wage as a janitor at a local sports arena. To earn extra money, he works overtime at night games. While the overtime pay is necessary to support his family, he misses seeing his children. Mr. Greene wants to complete a training program in auto mechanics in order to get one of the many mechanic jobs he sees advertised. He feels this would increase his family's standard of living and allow him to spend more time at home.

Mrs. Tania Greene stays at home with two-year-old Jim, who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at birth. She has dreamed of moving for many years and complains that her family can no longer remain in its small two-bedroom apartment. Due to the crowded conditions, Wesley sleeps in the living room and Jim sleeps in his parents' bedroom. Three years ago, the Greenes applied for housing assistance. They were placed on a list and have never been contacted by the housing authority. The Greenes pay $500 per month for rent. Their only income is Mr. Greene's wages, food stamps, and a small SSI check. Mr. Greene is concerned that the family cannot afford an increase in the monthly rent, which a larger apartment would require.

Thirteen-year-old Wesley is an exceptional student. He is currently at the top of his class in every subject, and the school has suggested that he take advanced placement courses. Wesley's father, Ricky Nash, was ordered by the court to contribute to the support of his son. While Ricky does visit Wesley once a month, Mrs. Greene tries to persuade Ricky to visit his son more frequently. When Ricky does visit, a fight usually ensues between Mr. Greene and Ricky over Mr. Greene's parenting skills. For the last two months, Ricky has not contributed to his son's support. During an argument over money, Mr. Greene yelled at his wife, telling her she had better get some money from her "no-good ex-husband." Upon overhearing the argument, Wesley ran out of the house. When he returned later that evening, his eyes were red from crying. Mr. Greene is a heavy smoker.

Mrs. Green is deeply upset by Wesley's increasing asthma attacks. She is continually harping on her husband to kick the habit.

Ten-year-old Ellen recently discovered boys, and much to her parents' dismay, she receives phone calls at all hours of the night from "friends." Ellen has had problems on the school bus and has been forced to defend herself. Yesterday, Ellen was suspended from school for fighting.

Michele attends the local Head Start program, where she is loved by all. She is an active and creative child who especially likes to paint and draw. The Greenes and Michele's teacher recently completed an *Individualized Education Plan* which focused on helping Michele communicate in complete sentences.

You are meeting with the Greenes today to help them identify their goals for the future.

Handout 3: A Six-Step Approach for Achieving Family Goals

Overview

Once the family's goals for the future are identified, staff should encourage parents to make them a reality. However, families have the right to decide when and how they want Head Start involved in their pursuit of family goals. Because Head Start families vary with regard to their interest or readiness for staff involvement in achieving family goals, staff must ***individualize*** *their efforts with families, allowing for differences among families in their goals and approaches for achieving them. Any approach used should describe not only the family's goals, but also its strategies, responsibilities, and timetables. A six-step approach provides staff with a* ***process*** *for working with families, other Head Start staff, and community partners to help families achieve their goals. A six-step approach involves:*

Step 1: **Review Goal Statements and Incorporate Pre-Existing Plans**

Now is the time to review the goal statements developed by the family to make sure that they are accurate and encompass the four characteristics of a clearly articulated and defined goal. Any plans for achieving family goals must build on, where appropriate, all prior agreements, including the Individual Family Service Plan, the Individual Education Plan, the Individual Health Plan, and plans developed with other community partners. Step 1:

- Builds focus;
- Clarifies the goal; and
- Avoids duplication of effort or conflict with any pre-existing plans.

Step 2: **Recognize Skills, Resources, and Supports**

The staff-family partners identify family and community resources and supports that are available to help the family achieve its goal. The staff and family may ask other members to join the partnership and support the family in achieving its goals. At this step, the team should assess the skills of each team member. Step 2:

- Ensures that all skills, resources, and supports available for achieving the goal are considered.

Step 3: **Identify Strategies**

Step 3 is a time to identify concrete strategies for achieving the family goal. If the strategies developed seem large and complex, requiring several steps to accomplish, the strategies should be broken down into doable activities. Step 3:

- Creates a sense of accomplishment and success along the way;
- Builds team consensus; and
- Ensures that strategies are within the realm of possibility.

Handout 3: A Six-Step Approach for Achieving Family Goals (continued)

Step 4: **Assign Responsibility**

This step involves assigning responsibility for the identified strategies to team members based on their skills, resources, and supports. If there is a strategy that requires a skill that no team member possesses or a resource to which the team doesn't have access, the team focuses its attention on overcoming the barrier. Step 4:

- Creates a sense of ownership;
- Builds on strengths;
- Promotes the development of new skills and competencies;
- Distributes the work;
- Reduces the risk of team members becoming overwhelmed; and
- Makes follow-up and progress review manageable.

Step 5: **Create a Timetable**

After strategies are assigned, the team identifies the completion date(s) for each assigned strategy. Reasonable time frames for accomplishing the strategies are critical. Step 5:

- Holds the team accountable; and
- Makes progress review manageable.

Step 6: **Provide Follow-up and Progress Review**

Identifying goals is an ongoing process. Staff should review, record, and reinforce the family's progress toward goal achievement, providing additional support where appropriate. Step 6:

- Keeps team members on task and on time;
- Provides an opportunity to revisit and revise goal statements;
- Ensures program accountability;
- Recognizes family achievements; and
- Reviews provided services and referral outcomes.

Handout 4: Role Play: Achieving the Greene Family's Goals

Facilitator's Instructions

Ask your group for five volunteers to role play 1) Ms. Roxy White, a Head Start staff member; 2) Mr. Jon Greene, janitor and father of three; 3) Mrs. Tania Greene, homemaker and mother of four; 4) Wesley Nash, age 13; 5) Ellen Greene, age 10. Distribute the role play name tags and the pre-cut role play scripts (depicted below) to each volunteer, making sure role players do not see each other's scripts. Give the role players a few minutes to think about their roles and establish the scene in the Greene family home. State that the purpose of this visit is to help the family develop a plan to achieve its goals, based on the information provided in the role play and using handout 5. Tell the volunteer playing the role of Ms. White to plan to take the lead in initiating the visit. Refer remaining group members to handout 6, which provides guidelines for observing and discussing the role play. Ask observers to separate themselves from the role players by moving their chairs outside the role play area. Allow about 20 minutes for the role play, being sure not to stop the visit at a critical point, and allow 25 minutes for discussion. (You may want to appoint a timekeeper.) During the discussion, make sure all role players and observers have the chance to share their reactions to the role play.

Role Play Scripts

✂----------

Ms. Roxy White, Head Start Staff

Over the last several months, you believe that you have established a partnership with the Greene family built on mutual trust and respect. You see the Greenes as a kind and caring family with many strengths. Recently, you have been working in partnership with the Greenes by exploring family growth and identifying goals. At your last home visit, the Greenes identified three family goals. The family will 1) move into a larger living environment (at least three bedrooms) by next year; 2) enroll Mr. Greene into next month's job training course for auto mechanics; and 3) get medical advise within the next two weeks on controlling Wesley's increasing asthma attacks. This visit is devoted to developing a plan with the Greenes to achieve the family's goals. Start by reviewing the family's previously identified goals.

✂----------

Mr. Jon Greene, Janitor and Father of Three

You want nothing more than to support your family and make all your wife's dreams come true. Unfortunately, all of your hopes for the family have evaporated. You would like to move to a bigger apartment, but you feel that you just can't afford this goal. Moving, you believe, would require setting aside your life long dream of becoming an auto mechanic. To make matters worse, you and your wife have been having arguments over money. However, you just know that things would be easier if Ricky Nash paid his child support. You are considering swallowing your pride and taking the little extra money that is always offered from your mother-in-law. You are very proud of Wesley and work with him as often as possible on his homework because you hope he will go to college someday. Yesterday, you quit smoking in order to help Wesley with his asthma. However, you just don't know how to help the other children. You are impressed that Roxy was willing to meet with the entire family.

Handout 4: Role Play: Achieving the Greene Family's Goals (continued)

Mrs. Tania Greene, Homemaker and Mother of Four

You are extremely tired and overextended. You feel that you are responsible for Michele being unable to speak in complete sentences. Once Jim was born, you had only limited time for her. In the past, you have refused to enroll Jim in Early Head Start. However, Roxy recently linked you with a new home-based education program offered by the community. For the last several weeks, you have been trying new developmental techniques with Jim, but nothing seems to be working. You worry continually about Ellen. You don't want her to repeat your mistakes and become pregnant at age 16. However, you have been unable to bring up any life discussions with your daughter. You wish that Ricky would either pay his child support or just disappear altogether. The fights between your husband and Ricky are upsetting to Wesley and driving you crazy. You fear that if you don't get out of the house and talk with other adults, you may start talking in one word sentences. You don't blame your husband. He works extremely hard in order to provide for the family. You know that he is worried about being able to afford new housing, but you know that you can cut down on some expenses and move to the house of your dreams. More importantly, if your husband succeeds in the job training program, your family will not need to worry about money. You are prepared to do whatever it takes to make life better.

Wesley Nash, Thirteen Years Old

Everything makes you cry. The kids tease you at school, and you feel embarrassed that you can't control your emotions. You want nothing more than to move so that you can have your own room. You realize that if your father provided consistent support, the family would have the money it needs to move. Nonetheless, you want to help your mother find a house in a new neighborhood away from your real father. You love Jon and wish that he could be your father. In the past, you have offered to baby-sit for Jim in order to give your mother a break. However, your mother refuses to leave Jim with anyone. Because Michele looks up to you, most afternoons you work with Michele on homework aimed at improving her sentences. Ellen, though, refuses even to be seen with you.

Ellen Greene, Ten Years Old

You don't know why everyone is so upset with you. You haven't done anything wrong. But one thing is for sure: If the family moves, you are NOT GOING!! You have told your mother this time and again. You recently got a navel ring and showed some boys at school. Everyone thought it was really cool. Now, the popular girls want to be your friends. However, you are worried because next year you will be in the same school with Wesley. Everyone calls him a geek. You hope that no one thinks that he is your brother. You know that you haven't always been an angel, but you hope that if you show a little more effort by doing some housework, Mom will listen and pay attention to you.

Handout 5: Worksheet for Achieving Family Goals

Overview

This worksheet and a "six-step approach for achieving family goals," presented in handout 3, can provide guidance on individualizing an approach to help families achieve their goals.

1. ***Reviewing Goal Statements and Incorporating Pre-Existing Plans***

   With the family, list the desired goals it articulated.

   Goal 1: _____

   Goal 2: _____

   Goal 3: _____

   Next, review all pre-existing plans involving the family. Use the following questions as a guide:

   - What pre-existing plans, Head Start or community-based, is the family currently working on?
   - If there are pre-existing plans, how can I build on or incorporate them?
   - How do the pre-existing plans affect the family's goals?
   - How can I avoid duplication or conflicts with any pre-existing family plans?

2. ***Recognizing Skills, Resources, and Supports***

   With the family, identify resources and supports that are available to help the family achieve its goals. Consider forming a larger team. Use these questions as a guide:

   - What internal supports can the family draw on to help the family attain its goal?
   - What Head Start resources can help the family attain its goal?
   - What community resources can help the family attain its goal?
   - How can we build on or incorporate these resources or supports?
   - Should any community members, informal helpers, or key players (such as extended family, neighbors, and friends) join the effort?

3. ***Developing Strategies***

   With the family and other invited team members, develop concrete strategies for accomplishing the family's goals. If a strategy is large and complex, break it down into doable activities. Use the following questions to assist you:

   - How can the goals be accomplished?
   - What strategies should we use?
   - Are any of our strategies too complex?
   - How can we make a complex strategy easier to achieve?
   - What activities would pave the way?

Handout 5: Worksheet for Achieving Family Goals (continued)

4. ***Assigning Responsibility***

Jointly decide who will accomplish each strategy. The assignments should be based on the skills of the team (family members, staff, and community partners). Use the following questions to assist you:

- What skills or resources are needed to carry out this strategy?
- Who on our team has these skills or resources?
- Are we missing any skills or resources? How can these skills be developed? Resources accessed?

5. ***Creating a Timetable***

As a team, identify the completion date(s) for each strategy. Use the following questions as a guide:

- Which strategy needs to be accomplished first?
- Can the team carry out more than one strategy at the same time?
- Are team members working on more than one strategy?
- What other events might have an impact on this time frame?

6. ***Following Up and Reviewing the Progress***

As a team, revisit and review the goal-setting process and outcomes. Use the following questions as a guide:

- What have we accomplished? How do we know this?
- Do our goal statements, strategies, or timetables need to be revised? How?
- Are the services appropriate? Are they meeting the needs? The expectations?
- What additional supports or resources are needed?

Handout 6: Role Play: Observations and Discussion Guidelines

Instructions

As observers of the role play, watch for answers to the questions listed below. Record your observations. Look for both the verbal and non-verbal messages of the role players. When the role play stops, be prepared to share your observations.

Observation and Discussion Questions

- What techniques did Roxy White, the Head Start staff member, use to initiate the discussion?

- How was a plan for achieving the family's goals developed? Did it differ from the six-step approach? Was it similar? In what ways?

- Do you think that the plan developed will help the family achieve its goals?

- What would you do differently than Roxy White? What would you do the same?

- What feelings do you think Mrs. Tania Greene is experiencing at the end of the visit?

  — Mr. Jon Greene?

  — Wesley Nash?

  — Ellen Greene?

  — Roxy White?

Practicing Professionalism

Programs are only as good as the individuals who staff them.
—Head Start Advisory Council on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will be able to:

- **Define** professionalism in their work with and on behalf of families;
- **Maintain** staff roles and boundaries when working with families;
- **Follow** the program confidentiality policy concerning private information about children, families, and other staff members;
- **Describe** their role as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse/neglect; and
- **Document** and **maintain** necessary and required records.

Key Concepts

Key concepts of Module 4 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed for professional practices include:

- **Professionalism.** Professionalism is reflected in both deed and appearance. Professionalism refers to practicing the knowledge, standards, and skills of a particular profession or job.
- **Confidentiality.**[1] Confidentiality means safeguarding written and verbal information about families to ensure their rights to privacy. If families understand what information will be kept strictly confidential (unless they authorize its release in writing) and what information will be shared, and with whom (to provide assistance), they will be more open and honest in their responses to requests for needed personal information.
- **Professional Roles and Boundaries.** The essence of professional boundaries is the ability to clarify and maintain reasonable limits in relationships with families. Head Start staff must show that they care about family members but, at the same time, not become overly or inappropriately involved with them.
- **Mandated Reporting.** Mandated reporters are those who, in their professional capacity, are required by state, local, and tribal law to report suspected child maltreatment to the designated child protection agency. Head Start programs must have a plan for responding to suspected child

[1] Adapted from the US Department of Health and Human Services, *Head Start Social Services Training Manual* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, 1989).

abuse or neglect that complies with applicable state, local, and tribal law. In addition, programs must provide training to all parents, staff, consultants, and volunteers that includes methods for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

- **Record-Keeping.** The Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to establish and maintain efficient and effective record-keeping systems that provide accurate and timely information regarding all enrolled children, their families, and the services they receive. The records document the way the families develop and change during their time with Head Start.

Background Information

Family partnerships require Head Start staff to practice professionalism, following all program policies or regulations and upholding all professional responsibilities. Because even the most experienced and knowledgeable staff member is likely to struggle with professionalism at times, this module examines the key components of professional behaviors.

Professionalism

As members of a Head Start team, it is critical for staff to be regarded as, and to see themselves as, professionals. Professionalism refers to the knowledge, skills, practices, values, and ethics of a particular discipline.

Head Start requires all Head Start staff, consultants, and volunteers to live up to certain standards, regardless of their personal values or beliefs. For Head Start staff, the written statements regulating conduct include the Performance Standards, Information Memoranda, Standards of Conduct, and Program Policies. Together, these materials outline how each program is run and how staff will respond to children, families, and the community.

Head Start staff must always practice professionalism by safeguarding the **confidentiality** of families, understanding professional **roles**, establishing **boundaries** with staff and families, following the **mandated reporting** policy, maintaining accurate **record-keeping** systems, and **documenting** all interactions.

- Confidentiality*

  The word confidentiality comes from the words "confidence" and "ability." When these words are combined with privacy, ethics, and trust, the concept of confidentiality is born. Confidentiality can be defined as safeguarding information received in confidence from a family member or co-worker and disclosing information only to professionals for the benefit

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* Adapted from the US Department of Health and Human Services, *Head Start Social Services Training Manual* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, 1989).

of the family. The Head Start Program Performance Standards state that all staff, consultants, and volunteers must follow their program's written confidentiality policy concerning information about children, families, and other staff members.

Staff members gather important information about the family through records conversations, home visits, or family conferences. During these formal and informal activities, family members often provide details of family life. While having more information about the family allows staff to respond appropriately, staff should not pry deeper into a family's personal affairs than is necessary. Keeping information strictly confidential encourages the family to be open and honest as it engages in a partnership with staff.

The Head Start Program Performance Standards encourage strong communication, cooperation, and information sharing among agencies to improve the delivery of services to children and families. While most of the family information a staff person gathers should not be shared with others, it may be essential to disclose objective information to other professionals. Sharing pertinent information with other Head Start staff or partners within the community ensures that the programs are working together as a team to support the family. However, information sharing must be in accordance with the program's confidentiality policy. The team must be careful to respect the family's privacy and avoid talking about personal incidents in a family's life that could be termed "gossip." When information is shared with other professionals within the program or other agencies, the obligation of confidentiality binds all involved.

There are seldom clearly defined, foolproof ways to guarantee confidentiality when working with families. Staff need to understand the guiding principles related to ensuring confidentiality. They must follow the program confidentiality policy concerning information about children, families, and other staff members, and make careful decisions on a family-by-family, day-by-day basis.

- Roles and Boundaries

To support families throughout their time in Head Start, staff must be ready to assume many roles. These roles may include:

— *Advocate*: representing the family to obtain community services;

— *Collaborator*: working with the numerous supports and resources available within and outside the Head Start community to secure appropriate services for families;

— *Consultant*: responding to family requests for information to promote family success;

— *Facilitator*: making it easier for families to acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to accomplish their goals.

— *Mediator*: helping the family work through problems that arise among family members or between the family and the community service system.

— *Mobilizer*: motivating the family, key players, and community service providers into action.

— *Partner*: supporting all plans and agreements by completing assigned tasks or by helping family members complete tasks assigned to them.

— *Record-keeper*: establishing and maintaining accurate records about children and families.

— *Supporter*: being accessible to the family when barriers to achieving goals surface, and

— *Teacher*: helping families identify and develop the skills needed to achieve their goals.

While Head Start staff must assume many roles and demonstrate the ability to empathize with, and care about family members, they cannot become overly or inappropriately involved. For example, the worker should not take sides in marital conflicts, or volunteer to babysit when parents need a babysitter. Instead, the worker should guide parents in resolving such issues. The essence of establishing professional boundaries is the ability to clarify and maintain reasonable job boundaries. Professional boundaries also apply to the relationship between Head Start staff and staff from other agencies. For example, a Head Start worker must not become inappropriately involved in work he or she is not responsible for.

Head Start agencies can help staff maintain their appropriate roles and boundaries by establishing and implementing written personnel policies and guidelines. These guidelines can include: 1) developing accurate job descriptions that outline appropriate roles and responsibilities, 2) providing training and other professional development opportunities, and 3) establishing appropriate penalties for violating the standards of conduct.

- Mandated Reporting

Mandated reporters are those who, in their professional capacity, are required by state, local, and tribal law to report suspected child maltreatment to the designated child protection agency. When a problem requiring outside intervention is detected and reported, it is not an

accusation of wrongdoing. Rather, it is a request for the designated agency to look more deeply into a family's situation.

All Head Start agencies must have written procedures for identifying and responding to suspected or known child abuse and neglect, whether it occurs inside or outside of the program. In addition, programs must provide training to all staff, parents, consultants, and volunteers that includes methods for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect that comply with applicable state, local, and tribal laws.

The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect recommends that written program policies support the following practices:[3]

— Cooperate fully with the child protection agencies;

— Make every effort to keep children who are allegedly abused or neglected in the program. The child's participation in Head Start may be essential to helping the family overcome abuse or neglect;

— Provide an orientation for parents on: 1) the identification and prevention of child abuse and neglect, and the need to provide protection for abused and neglected children; and 2) program policy for responding to suspected or known child abuse and neglect.

— Designate a staff member to be responsible for establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with the agencies responsible under law for receiving child maltreatment reports; and

— Provide staff training on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

- Record-Keeping

The Head Start Performance Standards require that each agency establish and maintain efficient and effective record-keeping systems that provide accurate and timely information regarding children, families, and staff, while ensuring appropriate confidentiality. While there are many strategies for recording family information, the decision to document information in a particular way is be determined by each local program. Records help to document staff-family interactions, pertinent background information on the family, ongoing plans, and/or services a family receives. The records, therefore, provide a chronicle of a family's time in Head Start. Ideally, when a family leaves Head Start, the records should tell a story about the family from the time of enrollment to the last staff-family interaction. It

[3] Adapted from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, *Caregivers of Young Children: Preventing and Responding to Child Maltreatment* (Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, 1992).

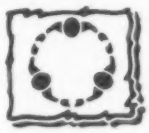
is important to remember that each family has the right to review all recorded information.

Records must be up-to-date, clear, accurate, and objective. Many times, staff find it difficult to write precise and specific records. Therefore, it is important to help staff develop the skills to express themselves clearly and specifically in writing.

It is also important to encourage families to record and retain their own stories, including their achievements and accomplishments. One example of family documentation is the family storybook. The family storybook is a collection of materials gathered by family members and Head Start staff. It is a living document of the family's aspirations, hopes, challenges, strengths, and achievements. The family storybook is owned by the family and lives with the family.

Programs are encouraged to design methods or tools for record-keeping that support the Head Start Program Performance Standards and document the building of family partnerships, the needs of the program, and the needs of families served.

Activity 4-1: Developing Professionalism



Purpose: To reinforce professional practices throughout the family partnership agreement process.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Clarifying Professional Terms*
- Handout 2: *Applying Head Start Policies and Procedures*
- Program Policies and Procedures on Confidentiality, Child Abuse and Neglect, Record-Keeping, and Standards of Conduct
- Nine sheets of labeled newsprint: one labeled "Professionalism," four labeled "Consequences," and four labeled "Head Start Practices"
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Encourage group discussion by asking the questions listed below. Record responses on the sheet of newsprint labeled "Professionalism."

   - What does professionalism mean?
   - How do we practice professionalism in our work with families?

2. *Provide an overview of professional practices.* Review with participants the concept of professionalism, as presented in the module's background information. Explain that this activity focuses on: confidentiality, roles and boundaries, mandated reporting, and record-keeping.

3. *Form small groups to define professional responsibilities.* Divide the participants into four groups, giving each group a sheet of unlabeled newsprint. Instruct each group to appoint a recorder and a reporter. Assign each group one professional area: confidentiality, roles and boundaries, mandated reporting, or record-keeping. Give the assignment:

   "To begin, each member of your small group should share his/her personal definition of the assigned professional responsibility."

   "Next, the members of your small group should work together to develop a definition of the assigned professional responsibility. You should try to incorporate as much from your individual definitions as possible when developing the group definition. Record your completed definition on newsprint."

4. *Debrief the small group activity.* Reconvene the large group and have each small group display the definition it developed. Instruct the reporter for each group to read the group's definition. Distribute handout 1 and review the four definitions. Have the large group compare and contrast the

definitions listed on handout 1 with the group-generated definitions listed on newsprint.

5. (a) *Brainstorm consequences and practices.* Hang two pieces of prepared newsprint next to each group-generated definition: one page labeled "Consequences" and the other "Head Start Practices."

   (b) Instruct the large group to brainstorm ideas about what might happen to families, themselves, or the program if they choose not to practice these professional responsibilities. Have the group address first one professional area, then another, until all areas are addressed. List responses on the sheets of newsprint labeled "Consequences."

   (c) Have the large group discuss ways in which each professional responsibility is practiced in the Head Start program. Have the group address first one professional responsibility, then another, until all areas are addressed. List responses on the sheets of newsprint labeled "Head Start Practices." Be sure that the responses include the following:

   - **Confidentiality**

     — Always obtaining family consent when sharing information;
     — Always obtaining family consent when inviting others to team meetings;
     — Keeping files secure;
     — Never gossiping or talking casually about a family; and
     — Respecting the confidences co-workers share with you.

   - **Roles and Boundaries**

     — Maintaining accurate job descriptions;
     — Knowing and adhering to program policies and procedures;
     — Not taking sides in family disputes;
     — Knowing how to say "no" assertively;
     — Knowing how to delegate;
     — Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of your job; and
     — Respecting professional boundaries with co-workers.

   - **Mandated Reporting**

     — Knowing and practicing the agency policy on reporting suspected child abuse and neglect;
     — Knowing the indicators of child abuse and neglect;
     — Adhering to all state, local, and tribal child protection laws;
     — Knowing what child protection resources are available for families; and
     — Knowing what counseling resources are available for staff.

- **Record-Keeping**

  — Keeping up-to-date on all reports;
  — Recording interactions with families; and
  — Writing purposeful entries that are clear, objective, accurate, and unbiased.

6. *Form small groups to apply Head Start policies.* Distribute handout 2, the program policies and procedures. Initiate a small group activity by dividing the large group into three small groups. Assign each group an "issue" to address. Instruct each group to make its recommendations for applying best practices.

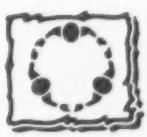
7. *Debrief the small group activity.* Reconvene the large group and have the small groups share their conclusions. Invite the large group to comment or ask questions.

8. *Close the activity.* Reinforce that staff need to acquire and use the knowledge, skills, and values essential for working successfully with Head Start families. Ask staff:

   - How can the Head Start program support you in your commitment to professionalism?

   - What can you do to promote professional practices within the Head Start community?

Activity 4-2: Record-Keeping



Purpose: To improve record-keeping skills.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *Recording Staff-Family Interactions*
- Handout 4: *Family Scenario: The Reagan Family*
- Handout 5: *Family Scenario: Record-Keeping Worksheet*
- Handout 6: *Family Scenario: Ongoing and Accurate Records*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Review with participants the professional area of record-keeping as presented in the module's background information. Distribute and review handout 3.

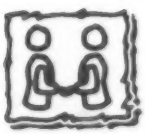
2. *Initiate a small group activity on record-keeping.* Divide participants into five or six small groups. Distribute handouts 4 and 5. Tell participants that they will document two months of staff-family interactions as outlined in handout 4. Mention that handout 5 can be used to record the family information.

3. (a) *Debrief the small group activity.* After 40 minutes, reconvene the large group and have one or two small groups read their documentation of interactions with the Reagan family. Encourage the large group to discuss whether the family stories, as presented by the small groups, illustrate appropriate documenting procedures.

   (b) Distribute handout 6 and review the documentation sample. Ask staff to compare and contrast handout 6 with the small group examples.

4. *Close the activity.* Close the activity by emphasizing that accurate documentation can aid in the delivery of services to families. Stress that families, too, find it helpful to document family growth. Encourage staff to work with families on creating their own record-keeping systems. Have staff take a moment to brainstorm ways to help families record their stories.

Activity 4-3: Professionalism



Purpose: To examine areas of professionalism that are critical to working in partnership with families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Clarifying Professional Terms*
- Handout 7: *Working on Professional Responsibilities*
- Program Policies and Procedures on Confidentiality, Child Abuse and Neglect, Record-Keeping, and Standards of Conduct.
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. (a) *Introduction.* Discuss the concept of "professionalism" as described in the module's background information. Ask the following questions to stimulate discussion:

   - What does professionalism mean?
   - How do we practice professionalism in our work with families?

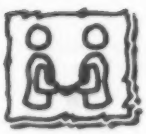
   (b) Distribute handout 1 and review the definitions for each professional term. Give participants the opportunity to choose one of the following professional areas: confidentiality, roles and boundaries, mandated reporting, or record-keeping.

2. *Assign homework to examine professional issues.* Distribute handout 7 and instruct the staff to focus on the selected area by completing the assignment as homework.

3. *Debrief the homework assignment.* When the assignment is complete, meet with staff to discuss the outcome. Ask staff to share how they will apply what was learned from the homework to their professional practices.

4. *Close the activity.* Review with participants the importance of practicing professional behaviors. Stress that even the most experienced and knowledgeable staff member is likely to struggle with professional dilemmas. Encourage participants to continue their professional development by completing other assignments listed on Handout 7.

Activity 4-4: The Family Storybook



Purpose: To use a family storybook to record and celebrate family accomplishments.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 8: *Pages from a Family Storybook*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the concept of the family storybook.* Emphasize that families, as well as staff, benefit from recording family information. Introduce the concept of the family storybook. Explain that the family storybook is a vehicle for documenting family growth. Continue with these points:

   - The family storybook is a collection of materials about the family which are gathered by family members and Head Start staff. It is a living document of the family's goals, challenges, strengths, and achievements.
   - The family storybook can be used to capture memories of significant events in the family's life, and to acknowledge and reinforce the family's successes during its time in Head Start.
   - The family storybook is owned by the family and lives with the family.
   - The family storybook can be used by the family to organize information about the family, such as a child's development.

2. (a) *Identify family storybook items.* Ask staff to describe materials they have collected that tell their family stories, or that have become a reminder of family accomplishments, good times, or even challenges (for example, letters, pictures, photographs, video or audiotapes, menus from restaurants, postcards, and so on.). Explain that these materials can help families gain a better awareness of their strengths and areas of growth. Record the materials described by staff on newsprint.

   (b) Discuss strategies for involving families in the process of designing and keeping a storybook. Ask participants the following:

- How would you or the program encourage families to keep a storybook?
- What kind of supports and materials can you or the program provide to help families create a family storybook?

(c) Discuss how the family storybook is similar to and/or different from your program's record-keeping requirements.

3. *Assign homework to create a family storybook.* Using their own families, have participants create a family storybook as homework. Tell participants to make this activity a family project and allow family members to decide how the book is arranged and what to include. Distribute handout 8, which serves as an example of a family storybook. Set a date and time to reconvene.

4. *Debrief the homework.* Review the family storybooks of participants. Discuss how they engaged family members, decided what to include, and celebrated success. Ask participants to identify reasons for encouraging families to keep a storybook. List the reasons on newsprint.

5. *Close the activity.* Explain that all families benefit from the documentation of their growth and development. The family storybook is one way of making documentation a meaningful and helpful family experience. The book lives with the family and the family decides what to include. Encourage participants to continue recording their family's growth and development by building on their own family storybooks.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 4 are presented below. After completing Module 4, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually or as part of a team.

- **Building Professional Practices**

  Ask Head Start staff to choose one or more of the professional areas in handout 1 and work with the coach, trainer, or supervisor to complete the assignments on handout 7. Have staff share the results with other staff.

- **Learning More about Child Protection**

  Have staff visit an agency in the community that is known and respected for its efforts in child protection. Supervisors and other community experts can help staff identify such an agency. Staff should meet with the agency's coordinator or supervisor to learn how the agency serves referred children and their families. At the meeting, staff should raise issues related to mandatory reporting, record-keeping, confidentiality, and roles and boundaries. After the meeting, ask staff to share what they learned with co-workers.

- **Celebrating the Family Story**

  Ask staff to plan and offer a workshop for families on creating family storybooks. Have families bring materials they have developed or are proud of, such as pictures, children's art, family stories, and other information that signals their accomplishments. The workshop should include a celebration of the families' strengths, as evident in the material they choose to bring.

Handout 1: Clarifying Professional Terms

Overview

Professionalism refers to practicing the knowledge, standards, and skills of a particular discipline. Staff exercise professionalism by safeguarding the ***confidentiality*** *of families, fulfilling professional* ***roles****, establishing* ***boundaries*** *with co-workers and families, following the* ***mandated reporting*** *policy, maintaining accurate* ***record-keeping*** *systems, and accurately* ***documenting*** *their work with families.*

- **Confidentiality.** Confidentiality means safeguarding the information received in confidence from a family member and disclosing that information only to professionals for the benefit of the family. When information is shared with other professional people within the agency and in other agencies, the obligation of confidentiality then binds all involved.

- **Roles and Boundaries.** The essence of professional boundaries is the ability to clarify and maintain reasonable boundaries for the position. Head Start staff must assume many roles and show empathy for family members, but not become overly or inappropriately involved with them. Professional boundaries also apply to the relationships between Head Start staff and staff from other agencies.

- **Mandated Reporting.** Mandated reporters are those who, in their professional capacity, are required by law to report suspected cases of child maltreatment to the designated child protection agency. Even staff not mandated to report have a professional responsibility to protect children by alerting their supervisors about any suspicions of child maltreatment. All Head Start programs must have written procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

- **Record-Keeping.** Efficient and effective record-keeping systems provide a chronicle of a family's time in Head Start. Ideally, when a family leaves Head Start, the family's records should tell a story about the family from the time of enrollment to the last staff-family interaction. It is important to remember that each family has the right to review all records.

Handout 2: Applying Head Start Policies and Procedures

Instructions

Using your program's policies, your group should discuss the issue assigned by the trainer. Your discussion should focus on the program's position concerning the issue.

Issue 1: Jobs in Jeopardy!

You are the family services worker for Autumn Head Start located in a small rural community. Community resources have never been abundant, but the community works well together, shares its resources, and manages to get by.

Ever since the local processing plant closed, employment has been a problem in Autumn City. You are the Parent Educator for the local home-based Head Start program, on route to your last home visit for the day. The family you are about to visit has been hit hard by the layoffs and there are few prospects for employment around the county.

When you arrive, the entire family (including four-year-old Jeff and five-year-old Jennifer) is on the porch. As you drive up, the mother runs to the car and says that a manufacturing plant in the next county is accepting job applications, in person, until five p.m. today. She says that all the other neighbors are running to get their applications in and there is no one to watch the children. She informs you that she and her husband must try to get a job. She begs you to watch the children for "no more than two hours," so she won't have to leave them home alone.

- What professional responsibilities does this scenario address?
- What does your program policy require in this situation?
- What is your response?

Issue 2: A View with Nothing to See

Recently, Valley View Head Start program began a collaboration with a local child care facility to provide full-day services for children. You and the other coordinators were instrumental in starting the collaboration and insisted that the child-care shift begin at four o'clock—ensuring continuous, uninterrupted services. Because your office is next door to one of the classrooms, you have been "covering" at least twice a week for the child-care worker who is continuously late. This afternoon, while you are waiting for the child-care worker to arrive, a new Head Start parent hands you her child's immunization forms. She states that this information completes the required forms for enrollment that she gave to the child-care worker yesterday.

After thanking her and seeing the child-care worker enter the classroom, you return to your office. Unfortunately, upon locating the child's folder, you see that it is empty.

- What professional responsibilities does this scenario address?
- What does your program policy require in this situation?
- What is your response?

Handout 2: Applying Head Start Policies and Procedures (continued)

Issue 3: Tattletale Teacher?

When Jan Springer arrives to enroll her children today, she looks wonderful. Jan says that things are going well and that she couldn't be happier. You sit with Jan to complete the enrollment application and ask to see the family's income statements.

All of Jan's papers and verifications are in order and the children's health records are up-to-date. You remind her that the enrollment committee will review the application and notify her in a week or so, but you do not foresee any problems.

As you are walking Jan to the door, a teacher goes over to where you were sitting, picks up Jan's files and starts looking through them. Your co-worker tells you that Jan has lied on her application. She says that she heard from her neighbor that the boys' father was living with them and supporting the family by selling drugs out of the house.

- What professional responsibilities does this scenario address?
- What does your program policy require in this situation?
- What is your response?

Handout 3: Recording Staff-Family Interactions[4]

Overview

The Head Start Program Performance Standards direct each agency to establish and maintain efficient and effective record-keeping systems to provide accurate and timely information regarding children, families, and staff, while ensuring appropriate confidentiality of this information. When recording family information, keep the following points in mind:

- ☐ Make sure all recorded entries have a specific purpose (e.g., tracking the family partnership agreement process).
- ☐ Point out the unusual or out of the ordinary.
- ☐ Record details that are normally omitted only if you believe that they might be significant at a later time.
- ☐ Record promptly to keep entries up to date. Do not permit recording responsibilities to build up.
- ☐ Be accurate. Record entries based on your direct experience with the family. Don't let your entries become distorted by discussions you have about the family's situation with co-workers or your supervisor.
- ☐ Focus on facts, instead of assumptions, feelings, and impressions.
- ☐ Check out the words you use in your entries. Avoid words and labels that give negative images about families, or that describe families from a deficit, rather than a strengths, perspective.
- ☐ Use language that shows you respect the family.

[4]Adapted from the US Department of Health and Human Services, *Head Start Social Services Training Manual* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, 1989).

Handout 4: Family Scenario: The Reagan Family

Instructions:
During the first two months in Head Start, Mr. Reagan had several formal and informal meetings with Head Start and community staff. Read the first portion of the scenario and stop to document all staff-family interactions and pertinent information on handout 5. Then, move on to the next interaction. Repeat steps until all interactions have been documented.

1. You are a family service worker. A parent comes in today looking tired and worn out. He signs the walk-in enrollment list and sits down. The two children with him are dirty and one is crying. You look on the list and ask for Mr. Reagan. The man does not respond. One little girl goes over to the man and taps him on the leg and points to you. The man comes over, extends his hand and says, "Good afternoon, I would like my children to be in Head Start. I am deaf and need an interpreter." You set an appointment date for next week.

Document this interaction.

2. Today, you and an interpreter meet with Mr. Reagan. During the meeting, Mr. Reagan tells you that one of his children, Laura, is deaf. Mr. Reagan is a single parent and has recently moved into the area to find work. He is living with friends, but needs to find an apartment that will accept children and pets. He also needs child care for his girls while he looks for a job. He is currently receiving unemployment compensation, which ends soon.

Document this interaction.

3. Today, you, along with the health coordinator and an interpreter, meet with Mr. Reagan. During the meeting, Mr. Reagan says he has some hearing, but his hearing aid is broken. His girls have had all of their immunizations and are in good health, but he has no money to buy winter coats for his daughters.

Document this interaction.

4. Today, you are meeting with Laura's teacher. An IEP meeting will be scheduled as soon as all the testing and observations are completed. The teacher tells you she is pleased at how well Laura gets her point across to the other children, even though her speech is difficult to understand. The teacher also states that Laura seems very happy when she is in the classroom, but she has observed some skill delays. As you are talking, Mr. Reagan comes to pick up Laura and asks how she is doing.

Document this interaction.

Handout 4: Family Scenario: The Reagan Family (continued)

5. Today, you are meeting with the case worker from the department of vocational rehabilitation, the interpreter, and Mr. Reagan to see about Social Security Income and job training. The caseworker is not very considerate of Mr Reagan's situation. She states, "This is the way the State works and there are no exceptions." You get the feeling she is making Mr. Reagan regret this whole ordeal. You suggest to the caseworker that it might be helpful to hear what Mr. Reagan has to say about his family's goals, but the caseworker says that she doesn't have the time. Everyone leaves the meeting a little tense.

Document this interaction.

6. Today, you are in a meeting with Mr. Reagan, the teacher, the health coordinator, and the interpreter to develop an Individualized Education Plan for Laura. Mr. Reagan is very pleased to learn that a local church will give him $100 to buy winter coats. The health coordinator explains that a special city fund can pay for repairs to Mr. Reagan's hearing aid. Mr. Reagan also learns that a second meeting with the vocational rehabilitation case worker is planned for next week. Mr. Reagan is reluctant to attend. You encourage him to go and talk with the caseworker. Mr. Reagan says that he might go to tell her how he feels.

Document this interaction.

7. Today, you had the meeting with the vocational rehabilitation case worker, the interpreter and Mr. Reagan. The meeting was not as bad as you thought it would be. Mr. Reagan was able to tell the caseworker that he felt "let down" after the last meeting, and she admitted that stress from budget cuts was really getting to her. She apologized for her past behavior. It seems as though the Reagan family will be eligible for Social Security Income and job training for Mr. Reagan. Mr. Reagan must take some aptitude tests before the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation can finalize plans for job training.

Document this interaction.

8. You don't see Mr. Reagan as often now. From what the teachers are saying, his girls are doing fine. You were passing through the center today and you saw Mr. Reagan. You showed him that you had learned a few words in sign language, and he said that he was very proud of you.

Document this interaction.

Handout 5: Family Scenario: Record-Keeping Worksheet

Instructions

Document the interactions between staff and the Reagan family as outlined in handout 4. Make sure you provide a clear, accurate and objective chronicle of the family's time in Head Start.

Handout 6: Family Scenario: Ongoing and Accurate Records

Instructions

Look at the following documentation sample of the staff-Reagan family interactions. Compare and contrast this sample with those discussed during the large group activity. Remember, this is only one way to establish and maintain efficient and effective records.

11/6	*Participants:*	*Mr. Reagan, FSW*
	Topic:	*Walk-in enrollment*
	Follow-up:	*Set appointment date for 11/14*
		Requires interpreter
11/14	*Participants:*	*Mr. Reagan, FSW, Interpreter*
	Topic:	*Enrollment/Children-Laura (hard of hearing)/Katherine*
	Follow-up:	*Requires housing, child care, employment*
11/15	*Participants:*	*Mr. Reagan, FSW, Health Coordinator, Interpreter,*
	Topic:	*Children immunized, good health*
	Follow-up:	*Mr. Reagan requires new/repaired hearing aid*
		In need of 2 winter coats
12/2	*Participants:*	*Teacher, FSW*
	Topic:	*IEP request*
	Follow-up:	*Make appointment for IEP*
		Testing and observations of children needed
12/3	*Participants:*	*Mr. Reagan, Vocational Rehabilitation Case Worker, FSW, Interpreter*
	Topic:	*Social Security Income/Job Training*
	Follow-up:	*No decision reached*
12/15	*Participants:*	*Mr. Reagan, FSW, Teacher, Health Coordinator, Intepreter*
	Topic:	*IEP-See Attached for Completed IEP*
		Local donation delivered to Mr. Reagan to purchase winter coats
	Follow-up:	*Meeting scheduled with the vocational rehabilitation case worker*
		City fund for Mr. Reagan's hearing aid
1/5	*Participants:*	*Mr. Reagan, FSW, Vocational Rehabilitation Case Worker, Interpreter*
	Topic:	*Mr. Reagan is eligible for SSI/Job Training*
	Follow-up:	*Requires aptitude tests*

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Handout 7: Working on Professional Responsibilities

Instructions

Choose one area of professional responsibility, described on handout 1, that you would like to explore. As homework, complete the assignment described below for the area you selected.

- **Confidentiality**

  Obtain a copy of your program policy on confidentiality, read it, and be prepared to discuss the policy with your coach. Next, select one family situation where you are struggling with confidentiality. Develop a plan for protecting the family's confidentiality while at the same time ensuring that the family gets the needed services. Ask the coach to help you apply the program's policy on confidentiality to this family situation.

- **Roles and Boundaries**

  List the many roles that you must assume in your work with families. Use the list to think about times when maintaining appropriate limits with a family has been challenging for you. Then, interview one or two experienced Head Start staff to find out how they handle similar situations. Develop a plan for handling the challenge, if it surfaces again. Discuss the plan with your coach.

- **Mandatory Reporting**

  Obtain a copy of your program's policy on reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Read the policy and be prepared to discuss with the coach the following issues: Are all Head Start staff mandated reporters? How do staff make the reports? What kinds of information should staff share with the designated child protection agency? Should staff tell the family about the report? What happens when a report is made? What program and community resources are available to support staff in their role as mandated reporters?

- **Record-Keeping**

  Randomly choose ten of your files. Check to see whether these files are consistent with the suggestions listed on handout 3. Note all inconsistencies. List five ways to improve your record-keeping skills. Go over your ideas with your coach.

Handout 8: Pages from a Family Storybook

Overview

It is important to encourage families to record their own growth and development. One example of family record-keeping is the family storybook. It is composed of items or mementos gathered by family members and Head Start staff. The family storybook is a living document of the family's aspirations, hope, challenges, strengths, and achievements.

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Continuing Professional Development

Activities that Head Start programs may find useful for reinforcing and expanding staff training on *Family Partnerships: A Continuous Process* are presented below.

Continuing Education

Encourage staff to enroll in institutions of higher education and take courses related to their work with families, such as family development, strategies for working with adult learners, counseling, family systems, and case management. As a staff resource at the Head Start program, keep a collection of current course catalogs from local community education programs, colleges and universities, and other centers of learning. Make sure information on financial aid, scholarships, and other sources of tuition support is available.

Skill-Building Activities

Promote staff attendance at professional seminars and conferences that provide skill development opportunities and reinforce professional practices. Conferences and seminars are sponsored by a variety of organizations and professional associations, such as the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), Family Resource Coalition (FRC), National Association of Family Based Services (NAFBS), National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and National Head Start Association (NHSA).

Peer Study Groups

Help staff organize a study group to focus on areas of professionalism and continuing professional development. Members of this group can invite experts to speak on topics related to professionalism, professional standards, and challenges facing professionals working with families. Encourage staff to commit to personal and professional development by joining a professional organization and discussing publications that provide the latest information on family-centered services. Organizations, books, and journals to suggest to staff are described in the **Resources** section of this guide.

Resources

The resources listed below can help trainers, supervisors, and staff advance their professional development. Trainers and coaches need to be familiar with the resources and how to make them available for participants who wish further information.

Books and Articles

- Bruner, Charles. *Frontline Family Workers: The Role of the Family Development Specialist.* Des Moines: Center for Policy Assessment, 1991.

  In this paper, the author demonstrates how the roles and responsibilities of a family development specialist change when a flexible, comprehensive, capacity-building approach to meeting the needs of families and at-risk youth is taken. Using model program examples, the author describes how the frontline worker becomes a partner to the family, rather than a service broker or integrator of professional services. To obtain this paper, contact Charles Bruner at the Child and Family Policy Center, (515) 280-9027.

- Dunst, Carl J., C. M. Trivette, and A. Deal. *Enabling and Empowering Families: Principles and Guidelines for Practice.* Cambridge: Brookline Books, 1988.

  This book, written for early intervention practitioners, summarizes the basic principles of social and family systems theory. The meaning of needs and the ways in which needs influence behavior are discussed. The differences between intrafamily and extrafamily resources, and the ways families use these resources, are also described. The effects of different helping styles on individual and family functioning are presented. This publication is available from Brookline Books, P.O. Box 1046, Cambridge, MA 02238. Telephone: (617) 868-0360.

- Falcov, Celia J. *Family Transitions: Continuity and Change over the Life Cycle.* New York: Guilford Press, 1988.

  This book provides developmental perspectives on family changes and associated stages and transitions. The book is divided into four sections addressing issues such as family types, family stress, family satisfaction, cultural identity, and the family life cycle across generations. For ordering information, contact Guilford Publications, 72 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012. Telephone: (212) 431-9800.

Resources

- Lynch, E. and M. Hanson (Eds). *Developing Cross Cultural Competence: Guide for Working with Young Children and their Families*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing Company, 1992.

  This book is a guide for practitioners who work with families from diverse cultural backgrounds and want to develop cross-cultural skills. Recommendations aim to enhance the cultural sensitivity and awareness of staff. For ordering information, contact the Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285. Telephone: (410) 337-9580.

- McAtee, Arlene. *Family Development: Empowering Families to Move Out of Poverty*. Washington, DC: The National Association of Community Action Agencies, 1991.

  This workbook serves as a guide for those working in the field of family development. It focuses on understanding family systems, supporting families, and connecting families to their communities. For information about this publication, contact the National Association of Community Action Agencies, 1100 17th Street, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone: (202) 265-7546.

Journals and Newsletters

- *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*. Family International, Inc., 11700 West Lake Park Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53224. Telephone: (414) 359-1040.

  Published monthly, this professional newsletter is a practice-oriented journal directed to human service professionals. Articles deal with the theory and practice of family management, contemporary social trends that affect families, and public policy issues.

- *Family Relations*. National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Avenue, Northeast, Suite 550, Columbia Heights, MN 55421. Telephone: (612) 781-9331

  Published quarterly, *Family Relations* is directed toward practitioners serving the family field through education, counseling, and community services. It reports experiences in these areas, provides leads for others to explore, evaluates efforts using innovative methods, and discusses the application of research and theory to practice.

- *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 1133 15th Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005. Telephone: (202) 452-0109.

  Published quarterly, this journal is a source of current research on the state of the American family. Articles provide information on practice, theory, training, and continuing education.

- Pinderhughes, E. "Empowering Diverse Populations: Family Practice in the 21st Century." *Families in Society*, Vol. 76, No. 3, March, 1995.

  This article focuses on the rapid increase around the world in interactions among persons of diverse cultural and social backgrounds, along with major shifts in how the family is defined and increasing fragmentation and disconnection among families, all of which will place extraordinary demands on family practitioners in the 21st century. To help families cope with the demands, practitioners must be trained to be flexible, open thinkers who are comfortable with diversity and knowledgeable about multilevel approaches to family empowerment. To obtain this article, contact Families International, Inc., 11700 West Lake Park Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53224. Telephone: (414) 359-1040.

Organizations

- *Children's Defense Fund (CDF)*. 122 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20005. Telephone: (202) 628-8787.

  CDF, a private, nonprofit advocacy organization, gathers data, publishes reports, and provides information on key issues affecting children. It also monitors the development and implementation of federal and state policies; provides technical assistance and support to a network of state and local child advocates, organizations, and public officials; and pursues an annual legislative agenda.

- *Family Resource Coalition (FRC)*. 2000 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1520, Chicago, IL 60604.

  FRC, founded in 1981, is a national federation of more than 2,000 organizations and individuals promoting the development of prevention-oriented, community-based programs to strengthen families. In 1991, FRC was awarded a federal grant to operate a National Resource Center for Family Support Programs, which serves as an information clearinghouse and a training and technical assistance resource. It publishes a quarterly newsletter, the *Family Resource Coalition Report*, and a resource directory of programs. FRC also has a Latino Caucus. FRC can be contacted by phone: (312) 341-0900 or by fax: (312) 341-9361.

- *National Association for Family-Based Services (NAFBS)*. 1513 Stoney Point Road, NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406.

  Established in 1984, the NAFBS is an organization of more than 1,000 professionals committed to a family-centered approach in public and private sector human services and in social policy. NAFBS holds an annual conference, publishes resources for family-based services, including a quarterly newsletter, and advocates for families and a family-centered approach to social policy and services at federal, state, and local levels. For more information, call (319) 396-4829.

Resources

- *National Association of Social Workers (NASW).* 750 First Street NE, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20002-4241. Telephone: (202) 336-8600.

  NASW members are professionally-qualified social workers who provide services to children and families in health, education, and social service settings. NASW organizes conferences, provides information, and advocates for more effective service delivery systems.

- *National Head Start Association (NHSA).* 201 North Union Street, Suite 320, Alexandria, VA 22314.

  NHSA focuses on issues that shape the future of Head Start and uses its national voice to inform communities, states, businesses, and federal lawmakers about its concerns. Major activities of NHSA include education and advocacy on behalf of Head Start children, families, and programs. For further information, contact NHSA at (703) 739-0875.

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